BUSINESS / B1

Peso seen firming up to 43:$1 by yearend

ACROSS / A14

Man stopped from stabbing Gov. Panlilio

WORLD / A20

US still world's top arms supplier

NEWS / A4

SWS: Record 3.8-M families went hungry in last quarter

METRO / A17

50 employees of Muntinlupa university laid off since June without any reason

Traders say NBN probe is No. 1 'teleserye'

SANA 'WAG MUNANG MAG WAKAS. NAKAKAALIW!

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

UNLESS IT ACTUALly pins down Malacañang and President Macapagal-Arroyo, the televised Senate probe of ZTE

TRADERS/ A13

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, October 2, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 296 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Asean turns screws on Burma junta

BANGKOK—SOUTHEAST ASIAN NAtions on Monday turned the screws on the military junta in Burma (Myanmar), saying they were revolted by its ruthless suppression of a prodemocracy uprising.

For its part, Japan said it was considering stern measures against Burma. New Zealand, however, said it was the United Nations that must decide whether to tighten economic sanctions on the secretive regime.

A UN special envoy, who was sent to Burma to express outrage over the crackdown and persuade the junta to accept the people's demands for democracy, has been forced to wait until Tuesday to meet Burma's top military leader.

With protests quashed, news stifled

ASEAN TURNS/ A8

Resignation stops House impeachment case

By Christian V. Esguerra, Dona Pazzibugan and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

HIS RESIGNATION HAS BROUGHT the impeachment case against him to an abrupt end, but he is not yet off the hook.

Not only does resigned Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos face criminal charges, the congressional inquiry into the $329-million contract for the National Broadband Network (NBN) project, which he is accused of brokering, will also continue.

Lawmakers yesterday welcomed the unexpected resignation of Abalos, saying that it will spare the Comelec from another controversy.

"His act of sparing the institution that he serves from further harm has to be commended," Sen. Benigno Aquino III said.

But other lawmakers said the resignation was meant to protect President Macapagal-Arrroyo.

The impeachment complaint filed by Iloilo Vice Gov. Rolex Suplico will be archived as soon as the House receives a copy of Abalos' resignation letter, according to House Majority Leader Arthur Defensor.

"It's now moot and academic," Defensor said of the impeachment complaint.

Suplico said he would confer with his lawyers on the possibility of filing

RESIGNATION / A6

$329-M deal zaps Abalos

NBN row claims its first casualty

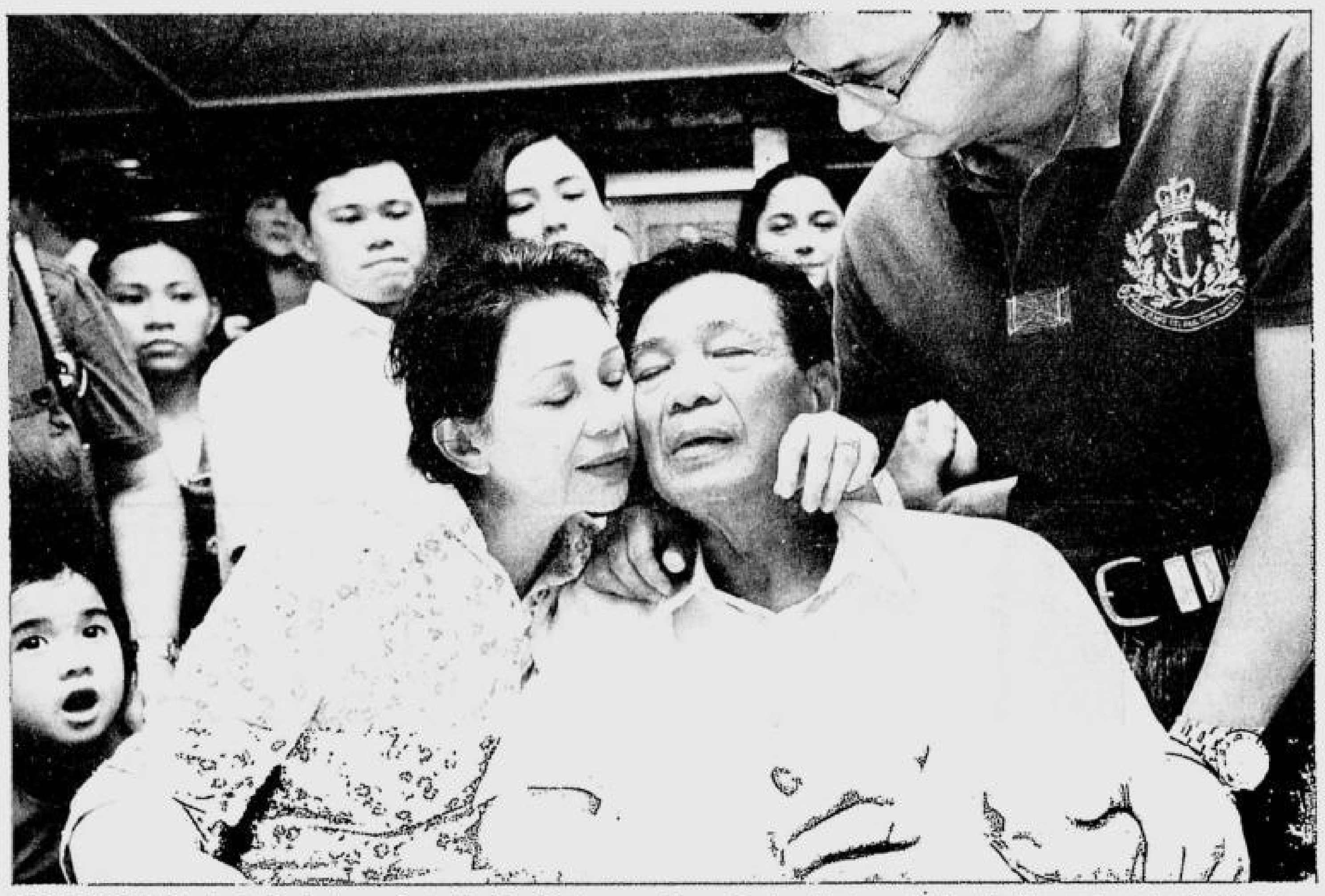
By Beverly T. Natividad

THE $329-MILLION broadband scandal that has hounded President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration for weeks claimed its first casualty—or sacrificial lamb as some critics put it—when Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos resigned yesterday.

"I have come to the painful determination that the time has come to separate my person from the office I now occupy," said Abalos, 72, who has been accused of offering bribes while brokering the allegedly overpriced National Broadband Network (NBN) project with China's ZTE Corp.

"I am resigning the chairmanship of the Comelec effective immediately," Abalos said to applause from a noisy crowd gathered at his residence in Mandaluyong that gave the news conference the trappings of a victory party instead of a

$329-M DEAL/ A6



HIGH DRAMA. Benjamin Abalos is comforted by his wife Cora, son Mayor Benhur Abalos and other family members shortly after he announced his resignation as chair of the Commission on Elections at Monday's press conference in his home in Mandaluyong City. REM ZAMORA

Gov't tells high court ZTE offered the best deal

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE GOVERNMENT DEFENDED IN the Supreme Court its decision to award to China's ZTE Corp. the $329-million contract for the National Broadband Network (NBN) project, saying the firm had offered the best deal.

The Office of the Solicitor General (OSG), which represents the government, decried the "lurid stories" that it said obscured the truth about the agreement.

The OSG, impleaded in the petitions to stop the NBN deal with the Chinese firm, also said in its comment that the agreement was aboveboard, did not need to undergo a public bidding because it was to be implemented via an executive agreement, and offered savings for the government.

GOV'T TELLS/ A13

'Thank God, Mr. Abalos responded to our prayer'

By Jerome Aning and Nikko Dizon

THE COUNTRY'S ROMAN Catholic bishops yesterday thanked God that Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos had departed from their midst.

A topnotch election lawyer, Leila de Lima, who had tangled many times with Comelec officials over allegations of poll fraud, described Abalos as a politico "prone to pressure" and said the poll body under his watch "became the worst Comelec ever."

"Thank God Mr. Abalos responded to our prayer," the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines said in a statement. "The best decision that Mr. Abalos has done is to resign amid threats of impeachment … Thank you, Mr. Abalos, for your decision."

CBCP president and Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo said Abalos' resignation mirrored similar actions by high officials in other countries like Japan, who "do not wait for any conviction to be pronounced (but) simply volunteer to resign."

Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz said that Abalos' example "should be followed by public officials" embroiled in shabby controversies and whose integrity and credibility "have been much tarnished."

The bribery scandal surrounding the National Broadband Network (NBN) deal that impelled Abalos to quit was the latest of a string of scandals to hit the Comelec under his stewardship.

Before the NBN scandal there were the P1.5-billion election computerization deal ruled anomalous by the Supreme Court, the wiretapping scandal that nearly led to President Macapagal-Arroyo's ouster, the railroaded people's initiative to amend the Charter, and allegations of widespread cheating in national and local polls—all of which had undermined the Comelec's credibility.

Journalists covering the Comelec beat would remember Abalos for his accessibility, even while he was playing golf.

In interviews, Abalos was often passionate when defending his and the Comelec's positions dur-

THANK GOD/ A13

A chance to reform Comelec

By Nikko Dizon and Ronnel Domingo

THEY HEAVED A SIGH OF RElief that he is gone, saying now is as good a time as any to restore the credibility of the Commission on Elections.

In separate interviews with the INQUIRER, a big business group, a top poll watchdog and other election stakeholders yesterday said the departure of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. should clear the way for electoral reforms.

"By February, there will be two vacant seats in the Comelec," said Alberto A. Lim, executive director of the Makati Business Club. "We hope new appointments would be done in

A CHANCE/ A13

GMA flies to Shanghai to meet with China president, other execs

By Michael Lim Ubac

SHANGHAI (VIA PLDT)—Would it be business as usual this time around?

With continued trade and political engagement in mind, President Macapagal-Arroyo is set to arrive here today to meet with top businessmen and high-level government officials to cement ties following the National Broadband Network (NBN) fiasco.

The first order of business for Ms Arroyo following her arrival at 9 a.m. at the Shanghai International Airport will be a meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao at the Xi Jiao Guesthouse at 11:20 a.m.

At presstime, the talking points in the 30-minute meeting were still unavailable, but Consul General to Shanghai Maria Rowena Mendoza Sanchez said she did not think the two leaders would talk about the NBN deal awarded to ZTE Corp. of China.

Sanchez told reporters that Ms Arroyo's visit was focused on the "political, economic and social development" of both countries.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila

GMA FLIES/ A8

CHANGING OF THE GUARD AT PNP
President Macapagal-Arroyo witnesses Monday's turnover of command of the Philippine National Police from Oscar Calderon (left) to Avelino Razon at rites held in Camp Crame in Quezon City. *(See story on Page A16.)* EDWIN BACASMAS

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Visayas will experience monsoon rains becoming frequent over the Western sections. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Rains
Baguio	Rains	Roxas	Rains
Tuguegarao	Rains	Cebu	Rains
Laoag	Rains	Tacloban	Rains
Clark Zone	Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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'10 telco insiders helped Isafp'

Doble says Globe, Smart execs may not have known of wiretaps

By Dona Pazzibugan

EX-MILITARY AGENT VIDAL DOBLE TOLD A Senate inquiry yesterday his former unit, the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp), was assisted by 10 insiders of telecommunications service providers when it wiretapped President Macapagal-Arroyo and other political figures in the "Hello Garci" scandal.

Doble testified that his former superiors, Col. Paul Sumayo and Captains Frederick Rebong and Lindsay Rex Sagge, had recruited 10 "assets" from Globe Telecoms and Smart Communications.

The big telecom firms earlier denied they had a hand in the illegal wiretapping of the President, saying that they did not have the capacity to do so.

It was the fourth public hearing into the "Hello Garci" controversy, which arose from wiretapped mobile phone conversations between President Arroyo and ex-Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano suggesting that they rigged the 2004 presidential election.

"Coordination was needed," Doble said in Filipino, adding that the Isafp recruited the telecom assets after figuring out their "weaknesses."

However, he did not name the alleged insiders, who he said were paid P20,000 monthly and given permits to carry firearms.

Doble said the officials of the two telecom companies may not have known about the wiretapping activities.

Meanwhile, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the defense committee hearing the wiretapping controversy, said he would call for a caucus to decide whether it was time to issue a subpoena to two Palace officials and two military officers who had snubbed the hearings.

Biazon said the 19-member committee would vote whether to hold the officials in contempt and order their arrest.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita had invoked "executive privilege" on behalf of National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, former Isafp chief retired Rear Admiral Tirso Danga and former Armed Forces chief of staff Efren Abu, among others.

Ermita said the subject matter of the inquiry "covers alleged conversations of the President illegally acquired which, if disclosed, would prejudice public interest in maintaining the confidentiality of conversations of the President in the exercise of her executive and policy decision-making process." The inquiry also covers military secrets, he added.

Concerning presidential assistant Remedios Poblador, who was summoned to explain her role in getting Doble to return to military headquarters at the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal in 2005, Ermita insisted she will not appear unless the Senate states her wrongdoing or shows the relevance of her testimony.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno agreed that the Senate must be able to justify its summons of Palace officials.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada also moved that subpoenas be sent to Bishops Teodoro Bacani and Socrates Villegas who had also refused their repeated invitations.

Sen. Joker Arroyo supported the subpoenas for the bishops, but objected to a subpoena for Poblador, who he said had worked as a protocol officer in Malacañang when he served as executive secretary for then President Corazon Aquino.

"What wrong has she done? She has done nothing wrong. What kind of a hearing is this? Is this a kangaroo court," Arroyo said. *With Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Norman Bordadora*

WHAT'S INSIDE

NERI STOPS controversial CHEd call center project /A7

RECORD 3.8-M families went hungry in last 3 mos – SWS /A4

GMA receives China envoy

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo yesterday received the new ambassador from the People's Republic of China.

Ambassador Song Tao presented his credentials to the President on the eve of Ms Arroyo's visit to China to meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao and attend the opening of the Special Olympics in Shanghai.

The President had a closed-door meeting with Song, who was given foyer honors by the Presidential Security Group on his arrival at the Palace. *Norman Bordadora*

Ping: What makes an executive session?

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

A SENATOR YESTERDAY QUESTIONED the presence of Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. at an executive session of senators last week where former National Economic and Development Authority Director General Romulo Neri was supposedly prevented from talking about his conversations with President Macapagal-Arroyo on the $329-million ZTE contract.

Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson said the presence of Andaya in the closed-door session on Wednesday rendered the executive session moot because only Neri and his lawyer were supposed to be present in the Senate lounge (aside from the senators, stenographer, sergeant at arms and some staff members) where all the private executive meetings are held.

"Secretary Andaya cannot be the legal counsel of Neri because he is a fellow Cabinet official so an executive session cannot be called with him around," said Lacson. A Malacañang source claimed that Neri himself chose Andaya, an Ateneo law graduate, to be his lawyer.

Neri testified on Wednesday that Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos had offered him a P200-million bribe. But Neri, who was Neda chief when the ZTE contract was approved, invoked executive privilege when senators asked what the President instructed him to do after he reported the bribery attempt to her.

The senators invited Neri to an executive session at the end of the 12-hour hearing on the National Broadband Network (NBN) scandal.

Lacson could not say who had allowed Andaya into the confidential meeting but that he had read in the INQUIRER that it was Sen. Joker Arroyo who had let Andaya in.

Several sources told the INQUIRER that Neri was "on the verge" of giving the rest of his explosive story on the lobbying and bribery in the NBN project when Andaya and Arroyo intervened. Arroyo has denied this.

Arroyo said the sanctity of Senate caucuses and executive sessions had been "forever shattered."

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Miriam sees conspiracy behind Inquirer story

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A CONSPIRACY THEORY IS PLAYING IN THE mind of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago.

Appearing to have recovered from a recent faux pas with the Chinese community, a charged-up Santiago took the Senate floor yesterday to denounce what she considered a media conspiracy against her funded by one or another "political group" opposed to the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) loan contract.

This group, she claimed, had launched an "expensive media blitz" aimed at "senators who are in favor of the proposed ZTE Corp. loan contract or at those who are neutral," which was how she described herself.

The contract to build the NBN was awarded to China's ZTE Corp. without a bidding.

Santiago said a part of the conspiracy was the INQUIRER's Sept. 30 front-page article titled "Senators on NBN-ZTE probe telenovela: That's infotainment" by contributor Edmund L. Sicam.

The article talked about the "entertainment value" of the Sept. 26 televised Senate hearing, discussing the demeanor of some senators, including Santiago, as caught on TV.

In a privilege speech, Santiago denounced the article as a personal attack "which is unethical, unfair and implies that he (Sicam) is a hired gun, shooting me down for money."

"That is beneath despicable," she fumed.

"I suspect that this is a political group behind Jose de Venecia III, rather than Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos," she said.

"Maybe this group could be temporarily allied with the political opposition. Maybe this political group is also partly funded by private service providers who would lose billions in income if the government stopped hiring their services. Or maybe this political group is also partly funded by the "Oust-Gloria" group.

"Maybe it is all of the above," she said.

For his part, Sicam said, "I wrote the article from the point of view of a television viewer looking at the investigation as a television show. I am sorry *kung ganun ang epekto sa kanya pero* (if that was how it affected her but) it's my opinion. She can disagree with it. This is a free country."

Santiago took offense at the article's description of her outburst during the inquiry that led to her now infamous line that "the Chinese invented corruption for all human civilization," for which she apologized publicly and formally to China and the Chinese people through the Chinese Embassy.

The article said "her sour face and aggressive demeanor made viewers uncomfortable."

Ex-Isafp chief gets gov't job

RETIRED NAVY VICE ADMIRAL TIRSO Danga has been given another government post, this time as presidential assistant to National Security Adviser (NSA) Norberto Gonzalez, Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said yesterday.

"By the way, Admiral Danga is already a presidential assistant to Secretary Norberto Gonzales, special assistant," Esperon said in a chance interview after the ceremonies installing, Gen. Avelino Razon Jr., as the new Philippine National Police director general.

Danga's appointment will apparently shield him from the Senate inquiry into the "Hello Garci" scandal.

Danga was the chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) when its agents supposedly taped a phone conversation between President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano.

Military officers invited by the Senate to the investigation have been prevented from Malacañang from testifying.

Had Danga not been appointed to another government post, Esperon said he would still have been bound to keep confidential certain information, especially state secrets, since he used to be Isafp chief. *Nikko Dizon*

New storm 'Ineng' beefs up monsoon

THE WEATHER BUREAU IS predicting more rain this week after a new tropical depression, "Ineng," developed east of northern Luzon a day after tropical depression "Hanna" swirled out of the country.

Ineng, packing maximum winds of 55 kph, partly induced the monsoon rains over Luzon and the Visayas throughout Monday, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

Unlike Hanna, the new depression will not hit land but it would continue to enhance the southwest monsoon and bring rain over the western section of Luzon and the Visayas, weather specialist Joel Jesusa said.

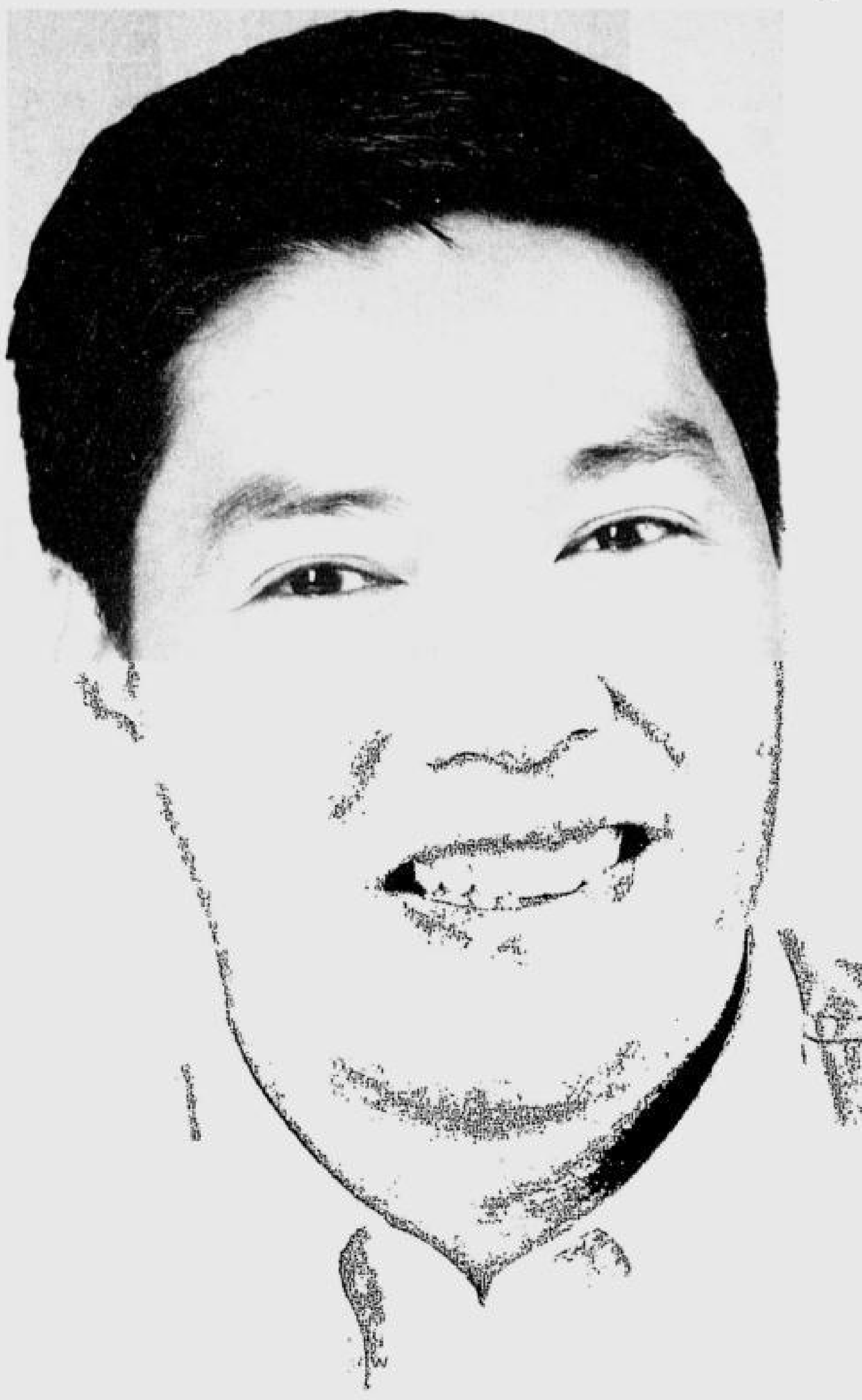
Moderate to heavy rain, broken by light rain, will prevail in these areas, Jesusa said.

"We should expect rain until the weekend. Because even without this system, there will be surges of the southwest monsoon," he said in a phone interview.

Ineng, the ninth disturbance to hit the country this year, developed from a low pressure area that was spotted east of northern Luzon on Sunday, the day Hanna exited the Philippine area of responsibility.

Ineng is forecast to be 725 km east of northern Luzon this morning, and 720 km east of northern Luzon tomorrow morning. At 10 a.m. Monday, it was hovering over the Philippine Sea 730 km east of northern Luzon.

Pagasa has not raised any storm signals. *TJ Burgonio*



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SWS: Record 3.8-M families experienced hunger

A RECORD HIGH 3.8-MILLION families (21.5 percent) experienced "involuntary hunger" at least once in the last three months, according to the latest survey by the Social Weather Stations.

This figure surpassed the previous record of 19 percent in November 2006 and February 2007, SWS said in a statement yesterday.

'National deterioration'

"The new household hunger score is almost 10 points above the 11.8 percent average in 38 quarterly surveys from mid-1998 to the present" which the SWS called a "national deterioration" due to record hunger numbers in Luzon (22.3 percent) and the Visayas (21.7 percent).

The September 2007 survey also found that moderate hunger, which refers to families who experienced involuntary hunger "only once" or "a few times" in the last three months, also rose to a record high, from 12.5 percent in June to 17.4 percent in the latest survey.

Those who reported having experienced "severe hunger," or hunger "often" or "always," in the last three months also rose from 2.2 percent in June to 4.1 percent in September.

Across areas, overall hunger rose by 10 percentage points in the rest of Luzon (from 12 percent in June to 22.3 percent in September) and by 9 percentage points in the Visayas (from 12.3 percent to 21.7 percent). In Mindanao, it rose 4 percentage points (from 17.7 percent to 22 percent).

Moderate hunger

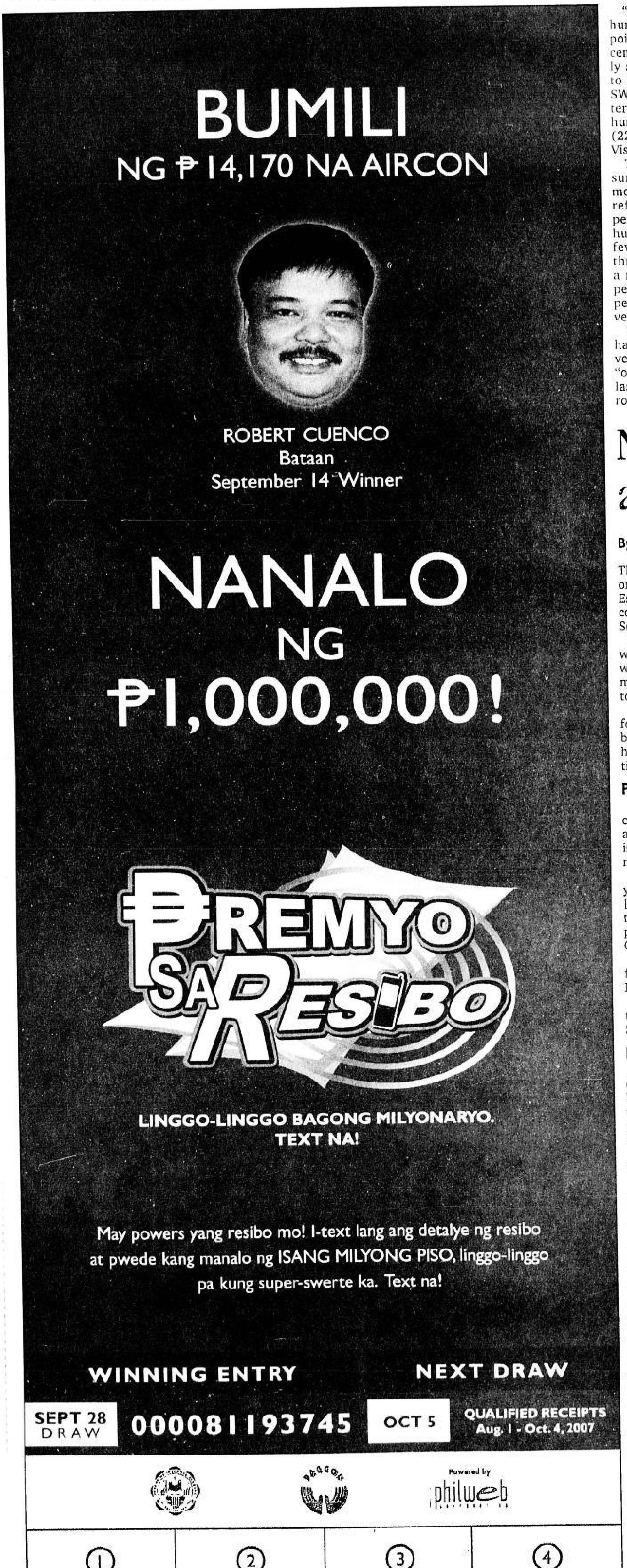
Overall hunger in Metro Manila, meanwhile, declined 4 percentage points, from the record 22 percent in June to 17.7 percent in September.

Moderate hunger also declined in Metro Manila, from 17.7 percent to 12 percent, while it rose in all other areas—from 9.3 percent to 18 percent in the rest of Luzon, from 10.7 percent to 17.3 percent in the Visayas, and from 17 percent to 19.7 percent in Mindanao.

On the other hand, severe hunger rose across all areas: In Mindanao, from a low of 0.7 percent to 2.3 percent; in Luzon, from 2.7 percent to 4.3 percent; in the Visayas, from 1.7 percent to 4.3 percent, and in Metro Manila, from 4.3 percent to 5.7 percent.

The survey question on household hunger was directed to household heads who were asked whether the family had, in the last three months, "experienced hunger and did not have anything to eat."

Conducted from Sept. 2 to 5, the survey used face-to-face interviews with 1,200 statistically representative household heads divided into random samples of 300 each in Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. It had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. *Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*



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No more talks; Erap must ask for pardon — Puno

By Norman Bordadora and Alcuin Papa

THERE WILL BE NO MORE DISCUSSIONS on a pardon for former President Joseph Estrada until his conviction for plunder becomes final and executory, said Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno.

Estrada should also apply for a pardon with President Macapagal-Arroyo if he wants to be with his ailing 82-year-old mother, without any restrictions, Puno told reporters yesterday.

"There will be no negotiations with the former President until his conviction has become final and executory ... Two, he has to apply for a pardon. No application, no pardon," he said.

Possible clemency

Puno, Ms Arroyo's presidential political adviser and Estrada's friend, has been acting as a mediator between the administration and the convicted ex-President regarding possible clemency.

"I don't think another three to four years of litigation will be good for the [former] President," Puno said referring to the period it would take for the appeals process to reach the Supreme Court.

"I hope his lawyers realize [the benefits of a pardon being readily available to Estrada]," he added.

Estrada's lawyers last week filed a motion for reconsideration appealing the Sandiganbayan's guilty verdict.

Final and executory

Had Estrada opted not to appeal the decision, his conviction would have been final and executory in a matter of weeks. With the decision already final, a pardon would have been available much sooner.

Estrada has been quoted as saying that he was open to a pardon from Ms Arroyo in the wake of his mother's failing health. He expressed a desire to be with Mary Ejercito during what many believe to be her last days.

"I know he wants to be with his mother," Puno said. "So my hunch is he is thinking very seriously on how best to proceed."

Is he disappointed with Estrada for filing the motion for reconsideration?

Legal remedies

"No. He is just using the legal remedies available to him," he said.

Puno also said he was in discussions with officials of the Department of Justice on how a pardon "might be handled."

"So that's where we are right now.,It's up to the former President how he wants to proceed. If he wants to go by way of his other legal remedies, that's his right and his privilege. If he wants to proceed on a shorter route and just accept the finality of judgment then request for a pardon, then we will act accordingly," he said.

Looking depressed

Meanwhile, Chief Supt. Romeo Hilomen, Philippine National Police Security and Protection Office director, said Estrada has been looking depressed lately.

"His aura has changed. You can see it in his eyes. He is so sad. Anyone would be sad given a guilty verdict and with your mother in the hospital," said Hilomen in Filipino.

He said he last saw Estrada on Saturday when the former President was allowed to leave his rest house in Tanay, Rizal, where he is detained, to visit his mother at the San Juan Medical Center.

His mother is reportedly suffering from hypertension and pneumonia.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project / Brief Description :	Supply and delivery of the following items per BSP's Terms of Reference: 1. 1 unit Electric Forklift, 3-tons; 2. 1 unit Electric Forklift, 2-tons; 3. 2 units Motorized Pallet Truck, 3 tons; and 4. 1 unit Diesel Powered Forklift, 3 tons
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) :	1. P2,000,000.00 2. P1,280,000.00 3. P1,080,000.00 4. P1,030,000.00
Delivery Period :	Within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days upon receipt of the approved contract

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project awarded and completed from Y2002 to present amounting to at least 50% of the ABC of the item/s to be bid. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Starting 02 October 2002 (up to 2 PM only)
2. Pre-Bid Conference	28 October 2007, 9:30 AM
3. Opening of Bids	13 November 2007, 2:00 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount equivalent to 0.05% of the ABC of the item/s to be bid.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI - October 2, 2007)

New, used planes for Air Force

THE GOVERNMENT is set to buy 18 new and 34 used training aircraft, military officials said Monday.

Maj. Gen. Pedro Insierto, head of the military modernization board, said the government had just completed the bidding for the new Italian-made SF 260 Marchetti aircraft.

He said the used US-made T41s would be bought at a "very very cheap price as trainer aircraft," adding that this was a special favor from South Korea from which the aircraft will be acquired.

Philippine Air Force spokesperson Epifanio Panzo said the 18 SF 260s would arrive this year but he could not say when the T41s would be in the country. AFP

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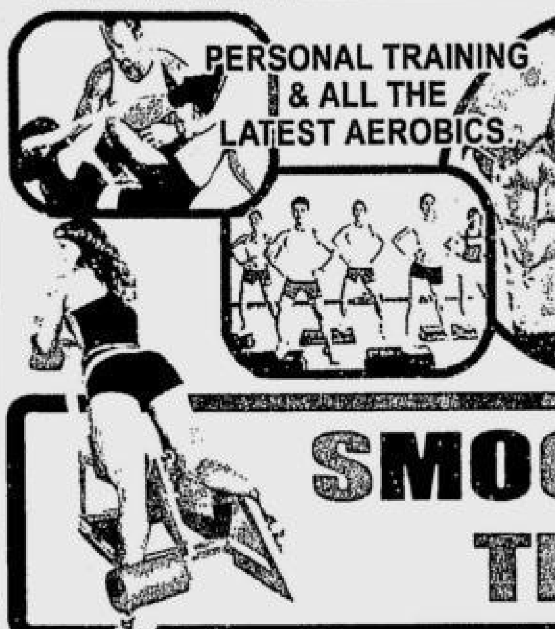
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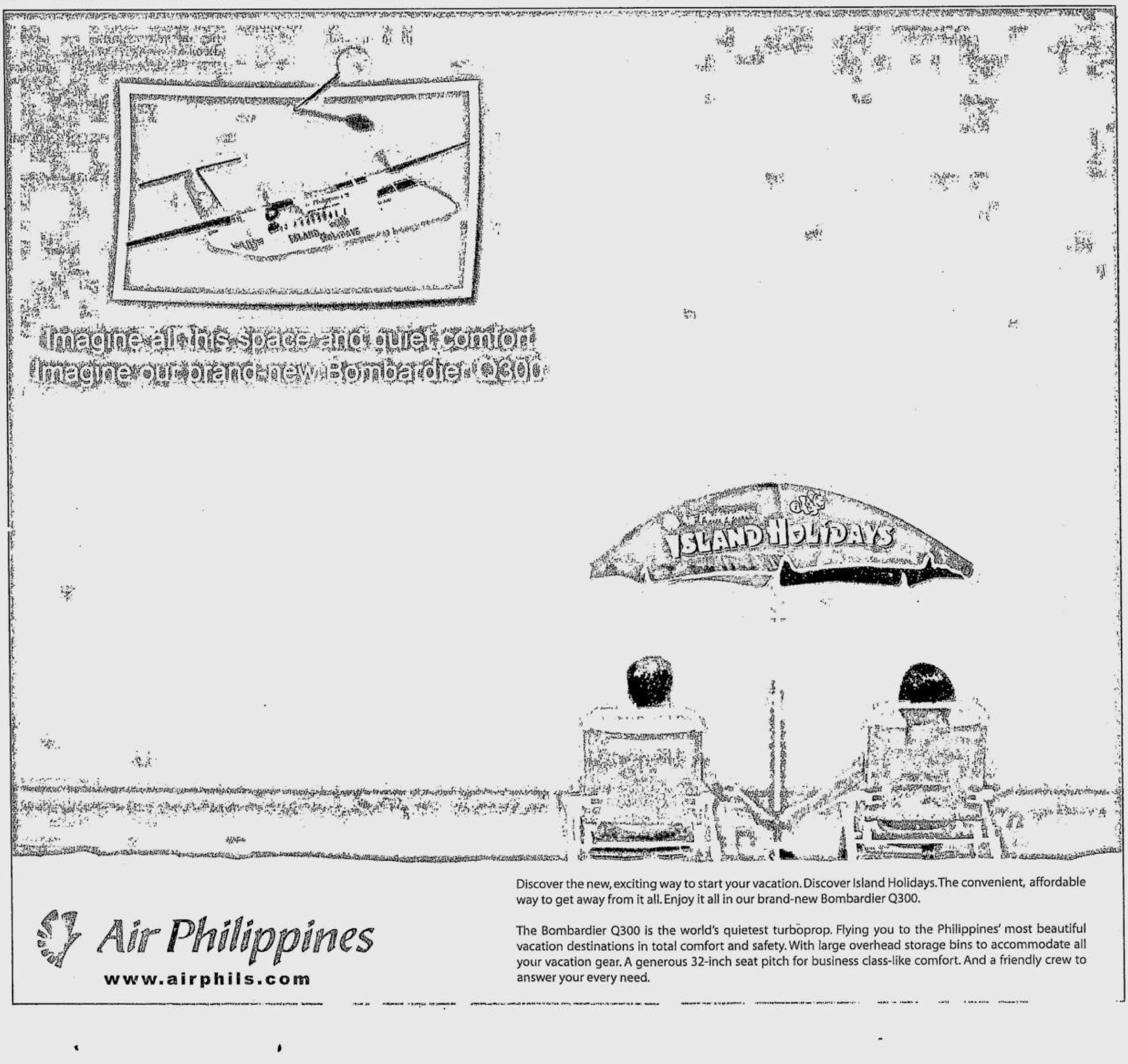
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$329-M deal zaps Abalos

From page A1

somber air of defeat.

Abalos, tears welling in his eyes, raised his hand to hush the cheering crowd and continued: "Let not my detractors feast on this declaration. Neither am I giving up on my crusade to clear my name and reputation."

The former janitor and golf caddy who rose to head one of the country's constitutional offices had vowed never to resign in the face of calls for his resignation that began with a botched computerization program for the Comelec.

He said his decision to quit would spare the Comelec from "the viciously, maliciously concocted attacks on my person" and allow it to proceed with the Oct. 29 barangay election.

"My resignation should dispel the claims of my detractors that I am dangling so-called 'political debts' dispensed when I was supposedly 'king' during election periods as a shield to fend off moves to oust me from office," Abalos said.

"And finally, my resignation negates the accusation that this administration is out to protect me and my incumbency."

Moot and academic

Speaker Jose de Venecia welcomed Abalos' resignation, saying it rendered "moot and academic" the impeachment case lodged against him by Iloilo Vice Gov. Rolex Suplico for bribery, culpable violation of the Constitution, betrayal of public trust, and graft and corruption.

De Venecia said that the resignation would spare the nation "a protracted, contentious and potentially divisive impeachment process."

Reacting to the resignation, Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said: "As I predicted, Abalos is the sacrificial lamb to deflect public suspicion from (President Arroyo's) connection to the corrupt ZTE deal and I see more heads to roll following his fall. It's inevitable."

By resigning, Abalos not only escaped the impeachment process, it would also prevent the Senate from putting him on trial.

Malacañang surprised

Once transformed into an impeachment court, the Senate, where Abalos has many enemies, could wield vast powers, including the right to subpoena records, open bank accounts, compel witnesses to testify and prevent officials from invoking the President's executive order barring them from appearing before Congress without her permission.

FORMER President Corazon Aquino shows her support for beleaguered Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos after he announced his resignation from the poll body. RYAN LIM

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said he was surprised by Abalos' move.

"I don't even know if the President knows already ... I congratulate him. I think he probably will (benefit) from the fact that the charges against him will now have to be backed up by judicial evidence rather than just mere allegations."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales met with Abalos for an hour at a restaurant near his house.

"We just greeted him on his decision," said Ermita who described Abalos as a personal friend. Asked if he carried any message from the President, Ermita said he, Andaya and Gonzales just wished Abalos luck.

Aquino visit

One of the first to commiserate with Abalos was former President Corazon Aquino, who said she came to repay a debt of gratitude when Abalos gave her his support when her administration was threatened by coups.

"I'm returning his support," Aquino said. She added that her visit should remind Abalos that he still had friends.

Asked about the charges against Abalos, Aquino said: "The truth will out ... Let us pray. Trust everything to the Lord."

The resignation came a week after former Director General Romulo Neri of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) told a Senate inquiry that Abalos during a round of golf had offered him P200 million ostensibly to approve the broadband deal that would digitally connect the central government in Manila with far-flung barangays and save billions of pesos in telecommunication expenses.

Neri testified that he subsequently told President Macapagal-Arroyo in a telephone conversation about the Abalos offer and she forthwith advised him to reject it. Neri refused to answer follow-up questions on details of his discussions with the President from exasperated senators, invoking "executive privilege."

In spite of Neri's revelations about the alleged bribe offer, the President proceeded to approve the project that has also implicated her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Abalos vehemently denied Neri's testimony. Neri is scheduled to appear on Thursday at the resumption of the Senate hearing.

Abalos said that he had appeared at the Senate hearing against the advice of his lawyer and close friends, "driven by what I expected would be the inherent fairness of a Senate inquiry and the statesmanship of our senators."

"I was sorely mistaken. I was not treated fairly. My declarations were limited to only those that most of my interrogators wanted to hear," Abalos said.

In ending 40 years of government service, Abalos thanked his constituents in Mandaluyong, where he was a three-term mayor.

"I find comfort in the thought that at the end of even the longest of nights, the dawn will break. With the grace of the Almighty, I am confident that I shall see you once again, head unbowed, at daybreak."

Chants of undying support

The news conference was held after a Mass. To chants of undying support (*walang iwanan*) and jeers to his opponents, Abalos's son—Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos—announced his father had an important message and the Comelec chair then proceeded to read from a prepared statement.

Abalos stressed that he was not afraid of facing an impeachment. He noted that while three congressmen had endorsed the impeachment case, the vote of 80 representatives was needed to send it to the Senate for trial.

Now stripped of his immunities after vacating his post at the Comelec, Abalos said that his resignation opened the door for the filing of any case against him.

"I am willing to face any and all charges they could file against me," he said.

Lawsuits against accusers

Abalos said that he was also preparing lawsuits against his accusers.

Gabriel Villareal, Abalos's counsel, told reporters charges of perjury and libel were being prepared against Neri, and another libel suit against Jose

MANDALUYONG City Mayor Benhur Abalos kisses his father, Ben Abalos, who announced he was resigning as Comelec chair. REM ZAMORA

"Joey" De Venecia III, losing bidder in the broadband deal. The namesake son of the House Speaker initially blew the whistle on the Comelec chair.

Villareal said the Abalos camp was considering filing a P10-million civil suit against Neri "specifically for the lies he said under oath."

Another P10-million libel suit is in the offing against young De Venecia for his allegations that Abalos had attempted to bribe him with $10 million to back off from his bid for the NBN project.

De Venecia is cofounder of local telecommunication firm Amsterdam Holdings Inc. He had also submitted a proposal to operate an NBN project under a build-operate-transfer scheme at no cost to the government that Ms Arroyo had initially favored before she changed her mind and inexplicably went for the 20-year China deal at 3 percent annual interest.

Family consensus

Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos said that the decision of his father to step down was a "family consensus" and that he was not pressured by the administration to quit.

"He did this for his family," Benhur said, adding that the whole clan supports his father in his future battles. "You always find refuge and solace in your family. We will always be behind my dad."

Family members said they had a heart-to-heart talk with the Abalos patriarch over the weekend to discuss the controversy. Benhur said he appealed to his father to resign so that he could take a break from the crisis.

He added that he had urged his father to retire in October last year. The Comelec chair rejected the idea, saying he wanted to prove that he could have a clean and credible mid-term May 2007 elections.

Abalos relented when his children urged him to consider his health and the effects of the controversy on his wife, children and grandchildren.

Benhur said the family was tired of seeing and hearing his father's name in a bad light in the newspapers, television and radio.

"He owes it to himself and family to give himself a break," Benhur said. He added that his father might go to his farm in Iloilo to get a much-needed rest.

Benhur also said his mother, Corazon, had been depressed by the controversy.

During the press conference, Corazon slammed her husband's critics, saying they have treated him unfairly. She said the charges against her husband were "very malicious."

With reports from Norman Bordadora, Alcuin Papa and Kristine L. Alave

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Resignation stops House impeachment case

From page A1

criminal charges against Abalos.

"The boxing match had not started yet, but he already threw in the towel," he said.

Sen. Alan Cayetano challenged the Office of the Ombudsman to investigate Abalos on its own to show that the former Comelec chair "can't just get away from impeachment by resigning."

Cayetano, chair of the Senate blue ribbon committee which leads the joint inquiry into the ZTE deal, said the committee was determined to find out who else were involved in the deal even if it went up to the highest official of the land.

The House will also proceed with its own investigation of the NBN deal, according to Senior Deputy Minority Leader Roilo Golez.

Smart move

Jose de Venecia III, whose company was beaten by ZTE to the NBN deal, said the resignation was a "smart move" by Abalos to avoid a full-blown impeachment.

"It's actually a good move for him because he knows that an impeachment case will be very exhaustive, very embarrassing. Now he doesn't have to go through the wringer in the Senate and the House. He's cutting his losses," he said.

The son of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. had claimed that Abalos had lobbied for China's ZTE Corp. which bagged the contract and offered him $10 million for his company to stay out of the NBN project.

Romulo Neri, former director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, has also claimed that Abalos offered him P200 million to approve the NBN project.

Saving the queen

Had Abalos stayed on, the impeachment trial would not have allowed government officials to invoke executive privilege and withhold information as they had during the Senate inquiry.

"Abalos saved the queen," said Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño.

Earl Parreño, a political analyst of the Institute for Political and Electoral Reforms (IPER), said, "Ms Arroyo has escaped another potential crisis by sacrificing Abalos."

"It was a masterstroke to calm the turbulent waters," Parreño said.

But the resignation may embolden the opposition to further pursue Ms Arroyo over the scandal, he added.

Cheers

Abalos' resignation drew cheers from civil society and militant groups.

"His resignation paves the way for genuine electoral reform. We insist on solid choice of replacement and transparent, open process of selection," Leah Navarro of Black and White Movement said in a statement.

Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, hailed the resignation as "a victory in the fight against corruption and fraud."

Controversy continues

In the Senate, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said Abalos' resignation had not put an end to the controversy.

"Chairman Abalos is just one player in this issue. The big picture is an anomalous, high-scale contract participated in by Cabinet officials and, if we are to follow the testimonies in the Senate hearings, possibly by the President and the First Gentleman as well," Pangilinan said.

Sen. Jamby Madrigal said Abalos' resignation was a sham. "I challenge Chairman Abalos to divulge the truth on who is really behind the executive's involvement in this act of plunder," she said.

Sympathies

While getting criticisms, Abalos also received sympathies from several senators.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said she "sympathizes" with Abalos' tragedy.

"I feel fully for him and his family, because as a Christian, I cannot possibly find enjoyment in the calamities of other people," Santiago said.

"He must have realized the situation has become exasperating," Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said.

He said Abalos could now face his accusers before the proper forum.

"We commiserate with all the family members ... It is my hope that the extended family, especially those who are not in politics, be spared from further trauma that this incident has brought upon them," Aquino said.

Aquino also challenged the President to appoint someone "critical of her (administration)" to replace Abalos "to show her desire for an independent and neutral Comelec."

Admirable

Senate President Manuel Villar said what Abalos did "is truly admirable and proves that he has *delicadeza*, which is rare nowadays."

"But we still have to finish the ZTE investigation. The issue is separate from Chairman Abalos' persona," Villar said.

He said Abalos probably thought this was a better exit move than being kicked out of office through impeachment.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson conceded that Abalos' move could be part of his strategy to avoid further grilling in Congress or dampen the probers and public's enthusiasm.

"The Senate should continue the investigation and ferret out the whole truth, not the truth that Neri knows which is discriminatory," Lacson said.

The United Opposition (UNO) also applauded Abalos' decision to resign.

"We commend Chairman Abalos on his decision ... (But) the search for truth behind the ZTE scandal should be pursued and should not end with Chairman Abalos," UNO president Jejomar Binay, who is also mayor of Makati City, said in a statement. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, TJ Burgonio, DJ Yap and Reuters*

ZTE execs surprised by resignation: What for?

By Riza T. Olchondra

"WHY? WHAT FOR?" AN OFficial of Zhong Xing Telecommunications Equipment (ZTE) Corp. asked yesterday upon learning that Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. had resigned.

Howard Xue, ZTE global marketing director, told the INQUIRER that he had followed last week's news reports on the ZTE deal and saw no need for Abalos to resign.

"I am confused. Why? What is (the) need to quit?" he said.

Xue then reiterated that ZTE did not bribe officials to bag the $329-million supply contract for the National Broadband Network (NBN) project.

He said that ZTE would not consider Abalos' resignation a sign that the contract would be canceled.

"We are confident of our proposal. We will wait for the (Supreme) Court decision. We follow the rules," he said.

As for the costs of preparing the proposal and the activities related to it, Xue said he had no data but recalled that ZTE asked the Supreme Court to lift a temporary restraining order (TRO) on the deal.

ZTE also asked the high tribunal to make Iloilo Vice Governor Rolex Suplico pay a bond of $2.939 million to cover damages to ZTE in case the court dismisses the case.

It was Suplico who asked the high court to suspend the implementation of the NBN project.

DepEd sets aside ₱6B for poor studes to go to private schools

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION will continue to provide financial assistance to some 600,000 poor but deserving students enrolled in selected private high schools nationwide.

The DepEd has allocated P6 billion in the next two years for the program, one of the "pro-poor thrusts of the Arroyo administration," according to Secretary Jesli A. Lapus.

"The government spends nearly P3 billion a year to subsidize the tuition of some 600,000 students in private schools nationwide," Lapus pointed out. "It is the duty of the government to promote and make quality basic education available to young Filipinos."

"Through the Education Service Contracting (ESC) and the Education Voucher System (EVS) schemes, we wish to provide equitable access to basic education," Lapus had told the INQUIRER.

The projects also aim to "decongest public high schools and in the process avoid the significant construction of new classrooms," Lapus said.

Program beneficiaries are given a maximum subsidy of P6,000 each per school year for tuition and other fees.

This year, allocations for the ECS and EVS represent a little over 2 percent of the DepEd's P137-billion budget.

The initiatives are covered by the expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education project of the DepEd.

They are managed by the Fund for Assistance to Private Education (Fape) in coordination with the DepEd's regional offices.

In the next two years, P5.04 billion will be spent on the ESC, the DepEd said.

Under the ESC program, private high schools are contracted by the DepEd to take in students from public high schools.

Last year, 430,000 public school students availed themselves of the program.

The regions with the highest beneficiaries were Central Luzon (50,231 students), Southern Tagalog (46,453), Western Visayas (36,276), Ilocos (33,466), Southern Mindanao (32,023) and Central Visayas (30,243).

The EVS, on the other hand, has an outlay of P1.05 billion for school years 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Last year, the program served close to 65,000 beneficiaries. This year, it aims to hike this to 100,000 students.

The program awards education vouchers to poor but deserving elementary school graduates, out-of-school youth and those who qualify for the Alternative Learning System Accreditation and Equivalency or ALS-A & E test.

Both ESC and EVS beneficiaries should belong to the top 50 percent of their class.

Neri stops CHEd call center project

Tutors instigate probe of alleged overprice, rigged bid, cash advances

By Jerry E. Esplanada

NERI

ROMULO NERI, CHAIR OF THE Commission on Higher Education (CHEd), has stopped the agency's P550-million controversial call center laboratory project pending the results of an investigation on alleged fund anomalies.

Neri yesterday told the INQUIRER he was "suspending further payments" related to the project, also known as the Integrated Multi-site Business Process Outsourcing—Incubation Contact Centers (IMBPO-ICC), which aims to assist state universities and colleges in setting up their own call center training laboratories.

'Totally misled and deceived'

Neri had ordered the in-house inquiry upon the request of CHEd Commissioner Nona Ricafort, who cited charges made by militant teachers of a "rigged bidding," of the ballooning of the project cost by an additional P200 million (from its original price tag of P300 million), and of allegedly irregular cash advances amounting to over P75 million.

Ricafort, in a letter to Neri dated Aug. 29, also asked the latter to look into the involvement of the CHEd's bids and awards committee (BAC) in the alleged anomalies.

She claimed she was "totally misled and deceived" by BAC members as to the conceptualization, bidding and awarding of the IMBPO-ICC. "My approval signature carried a litany of imposed requirements which to date I have not seen implemented," she said.

But BAC members dismissed Ricafort's claims as "mere allegations" and misleading half-truths.

Countered BAC members in a memorandum to Neri: "Why is it that BAC is the one being investigated when in truth and in fact, it was the commission en banc, including Commissioner Ricafort, which unanimously accepted and approved the project, ordered the BAC to conduct the bidding, as well as authorized (then) Chair Carlito Puno to sign the contract?"

They said the commission en banc approved the project "11 times since its inception, bidding and awarding."

The BAC is chaired by CHEd deputy executive director Julito Vitriolo, with Evelyn Mojica as vice chair and Regina Fortes, Ronaldo Liveta and Bernard Caballero as members.

Signs of plunder

The BAC members also denied allegations it had rigged the bidding in favor of a consortium led by e-Services Global Solutions Inc.

Earlier, the Alliance of Concerned Teachers had asked Congress to look into the deal. "All the signs of plunder are there," said ACT chair Antonio Tinio.

Some firms which took part in the call center project bidding also called on Neri to review the bidding process "for the sake of fairness and with utmost transparency and credibility."

"We were disqualified at the eligibility stage and not given a chance to be prequalified, thus paving the way for a lone bidder (e-Services) for the project," said Leonardo Riingen, representative of the SSC (SUC Call Center) Consortium.

SSC groups Informatics, SKI, Adrianse Group, Sandz and Ione Resources.

Riingen said the bidding was not only anomalous but also "disadvantageous to the government" and "morally disadvantageous to thousands of poor students" in state colleges and universities.

The call center laboratory development program is a flagship project of the Arroyo administration.

The budget of the campus-based IMBPO-ICC was approved and released to the CHEd during Neri's term as budget department head.

The commission allegedly jacked up the cost of the project by allowing schools to build separate buildings for the call center laboratories, according to CHEd staff members who claimed to have knowledge of the project. They showed the INQUIRER copies of documents relating to the project.

Lion's share

The insiders said the state-run Polytechnic University of the Philippines got the lion's share, or P200 million, of the original P300-million budget, contrary to the original plan to put up call center laboratories in at least 25 state universities and colleges nationwide.

They also alleged that the head of another commission attached to the Office of the President owned one of the firms that bagged a contract for the project.

The commission awarded the project to the group composed of e-Services Global Solutions Inc., Drishti Philippines Inc., Information Transmission Computer Corp. and Hillmarc's Construction Corp.

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Seminar on aiding the deaf set

A SEMINAR-WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS, therapists and teachers of the hearing-impaired will be conducted on Oct. 25 by Medical Electronics (Med-El) as part of its advocacy, in cooperation with St. Francis School VSA Philippines.

The seminar—Rehabilitation Approaches to Communication for the Hearing-Impaired—will be held at the Communications Foundation for Asia auditorium at 4427 Interior Building, Old Sta. Mesa, Manila.

One of the speakers is Ilona Anderson, a speech and hearing specialist, according to Maribel Mueller, Med-El country regional manager for Asia and the Pacific.

Anderson is director of clinical research and rehabilitation at Med-El GmbH Cochlear Implant Co. in Innsbruck, Austria. She has developed and implemented rehabilitation studies and techniques for deaf children and adults.

The seminar will feature testimonials from hearing-impaired graduates of St. Francis School who are cochlear implantees and now lead normal lives.

Interested parties may call Rebecca Santos, president of St. Francis School, at 712-3731 or e-mail her at sfsvsap@yahoo.com to register.

Right way to ask for donations up at workshop

WITH CHRISTMAS AROUND THE CORNER, organizations looking for donations for their charitable and other advocacies need to write fundraising letters but sometimes don't quite know the etiquette for making an appeal.

The season also makes donors extra generous and one may have a grant proposal but hasn't a clue on the basics of writing one up.

Writer, museum curator and environmental advocate John Silva is holding all-day workshops on grant and advocacy writing on Oct. 4 and 5, respectively, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The fee is P2,000 for each session and includes CDs containing study material. Lunch and snacks are on your own and there are eating places nearby.

"In my advocacy writing workshop, you'll learn how to make your cause known and supported. You'll learn the basics of presenting your case, outsmarting your opponents and rallying people to your side. I'll teach you the Jose Rizal advocacy method of using satire, irony and vivid descriptions. He was so good, he helped create our nation," said Silva.

The workshops will be held at the Ortigas Library on the second floor of the Ortigas Building at the intersection of Meralco and Ortigas Avenues, Pasig City.

Reservations may be made by calling or texting Silva at 0926-7299029 or e-mailing him at jsilva79@mac.com. His assistant Mel can also be reached at 0917-4195928.

More information on the workshop may be had from Silva's blog: http://johnsilva.blogspot.com/2007/01/advocacy-and-grant-writing-seminars.html

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, October 2, 2007
Guardian Angels

1st Reading: Ex 23:20-23
Gospel: Matthew 18:1-5, 10

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked him, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Then Jesus called a little child, set the child in the midst of the disciples, and said, "I assure you that unless you change and become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes lowly like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and whoever receives such a child in my name receives me.

"See that you do not despise any of these little ones, for I tell you: their angels in heaven continually see the face of my heavenly Father."

Commentary

An angel goes before the people into freedom/the desert and they are to attend to his voice as he guards them on the way. They are not to rebel. He would not forgive them, yet God's authority resides in him. Some think this angel, this messenger of God, is not just an angel but Moses who has been sent to lead the people to freedom and the land.

Yet each person has an angel, especially those who have no power/authority/rights in our world to defend and guard themselves from harm, sometimes from us. An angel can be a person but most often an angel means a message—more importantly the message from God is always the Word of God in scriptures. We are attended by angels, but the Word of the Lord is our companion, our safety, our refuge, and our source of strength, grace, and truth.

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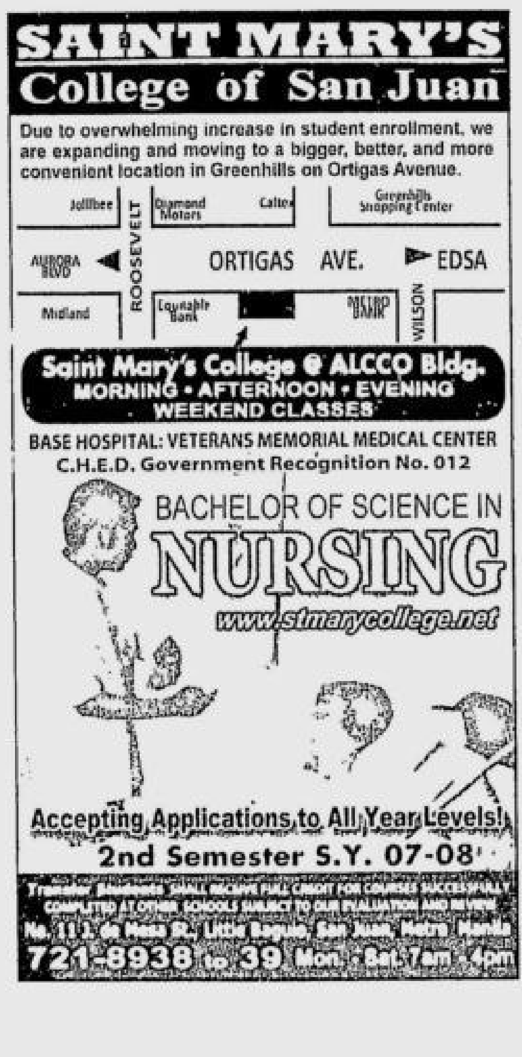

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Asean turns screws on Burma junta

From page A1

and Internet links cut in Burma, rights groups have voiced fears that more than 1,000 dissenters have disappeared into grim prisons.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), a 10-nation bloc that includes Burma, has written a letter to the junta leader, Senior Gen. Than Shwe, expressing revulsion at the violent repression of demonstrators.

"The confrontation that is unfolding in Myanmar will have serious implications not just for Myanmar itself, but also for Asean and the whole region," wrote Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, whose country currently chairs the regional grouping.

"We are most disturbed by reports of the violent means that the authorities in Myanmar have deployed against the demonstrators, which have resulted in injuries and deaths," Lee said in the letter dated Sept. 29 but released to the media only on Monday.

"The videos and photographs of what is happening on the streets of Yangon and other cities in Myanmar have evoked the revulsion of people throughout Southeast Asia and all over the world," he added.

Burmese troops opened fire on demonstrators on Thursday to end weeks of almost daily street protests against 45 years of military rule. The government says 10 people were killed in the crackdown but dissident groups say the toll could be as high as 200. Among those killed was Japanese journalist Kenji Nagai, 50.

The four-day crackdown on the biggest antigovernment demonstrations in Burma in 20 years also saw baton charges and tear gas used against monks, protesters and civilians alike.

1,500 locked up

Rights groups and diplomats are still coming to grips with the scope of the crackdown, trying to learn more about the hundreds of people arrested.

The Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP), which monitors Burma's prisons, estimates that up to 1,500 people have been locked up last week.

"At least 85 protest leaders, over 1,000 monks, and between 300 and 400 students and activists were arrested," AAPP secretary Bo Kyi said.

Buddhist monks, who were at the forefront of what has been dubbed the "saffron revolution," were forcibly disrobed and "severely beaten, kicked and insulted" by soldiers and militias, AAPP said in a statement.

The Hong Kong-based Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) said "at least 700 monks and 500 civilians are estimated to have been captured and taken to unknown locations in the last week."

These detainees, as well as 150 people arrested after the protests began in August, "must all be treated as disappeared, not arrested, until their whereabouts and conditions are confirmed," AHRC said.

Meeting reset

In a bid to end the crisis, the United Nations has sent its special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, to Burma. He met Sunday with some junta officials and prodemocracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon (Yangon).

Gambari was hoping to meet Than Shwe on Monday at Burma's new and remote capital Naypyidaw. But the meeting was reset to Tuesday.

Singapore's Lee said Asean leaders fully supported Gambari's mission. "He has gone to Myanmar to help all parties involved find a peaceful resolution," Lee wrote.

"I would like to emphasize the importance which the Asean countries, and indeed the whole international community, attach to Mr. Gambari's mission," he added.

Lee also warned that the unfolding confrontation would have "serious implications not just for Myanmar itself, but also for Asean and the whole region." Asean has already called for Suu Kyi and other political prisoners to be freed.

Japan sanctions

In Tokyo, chief Cabinet spokesperson Nobutaka Machbimura said Japan was considering sanctions to protest the junta's crackdown.

"As we have repeatedly mentioned, Japan is strongly concerned about Myanmar's democratization and human rights conditions and we will continue to raise the issue," he told reporters.

Japan also lodged a protest over the killing of a Japanese journalist when Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura met with his Burmese counterpart Nyan Win at the UN headquarters in New York. Nyan Win is reported to have said he was "extremely sorry."

In Wellington, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark rejected a call by the opposition for the government to unilaterally impose sanctions against Burma. She said New Zealand would instead follow the UN's lead.

She also rejected calls for New Zealand to suspend trade talks with Asean. "I don't think it is fair to the rest of Asean. I think Asean is deeply embarrassed by Burma's behavior," she said.

Outwardly normal

On Sunday, Pope Benedict XVI added his voice to calls for Burma's generals to peacefully end their crackdow

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THIS IMAGE taken from a video footage sent to the Democratic Voice of Burma shows the body of a Buc in Rangoon. The DVB said the image was taken on S

GMA flies to Shang

From page A1

said in Sydney during a September meeting with Chinese Commerce Minister Bo Xilai on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit that he and his counterpart would resolve the NBN issue at the "ministerial level" during President Arroyo's visit here.

Sanchez said the ZTE and Cyber Education deals, which have been suspended by Ms Arroyo following allegations of bribery, had never cropped up during business conferences here in Shanghai.

She said Chinese officials also did not react to Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago who had accused the Chinese of not only inventing civilization in the East but also corruption. Santiago has since apologized for the comment made during a Senate hearing of the ZTE deal last week.

Accompanying Ms Arroyo are Favila, business tycoon Lucio Tan, businessman Ricky Razon, Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, Deputy House Speaker Amelita Villarosa, Representatives Prospero Nograles, Harry Angpin and Eric Singson, and local government officials, among others.

Chinese upbeat on RP

"The Chinese will respect the decision of the Philippines," Sanchez said, pointing out that the official policy of China toward the Philippines was "to encourage Chinese businessmen to invest" in the country.

"The Philippines is a viable and exciting destination," Sanchez said, quoting Chinese businessmen who, she said, were still "upbeat" on investing in the Philippines.

She said that the atmosphere this time would still be business as usual, and that the warm welcome accorded to Ms Arroyo when she attended the Boao Forum for Asia would be the same.

During Ms Arroyo's 12-hour visit on April 21 in Boao, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and ZTE vice president Yu Yong signed the NBN and Cyber Education supply contracts.

Private meeting

Ms Arroyo's meeting with Hu will be held behind closed-doors.

A welcome banquet hosted by Hu will follow the meeting. Officials of the Chinese newspaper, Wen Hui Bao, will later call on Ms Arroyo at the Eton Hotel, owned by Lucio Tan where she and her party will stay.

Ms Arroyo will then proceed to the Le Meridien Hotel to keynote the Philippine Business and Investment Forum (PBIF) organized by the Council for the Promotion of International Trade and the Shanghai Overseas Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

Special Olympics

In the evening, both Ms Arroyo and Hu will see each other again during the opening ceremonies of the Special Olympics World Summer Games at the Shanghai Stadium here.

A 50-member Philippine delegation will be competing for the first time in the quadrennial event for athletes with disabilities.

The following morning, Ms Arroyo will keynote the "Global Policy Summit on the Wellbeing of People With Intellectual Disabili

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Agence France Presse by the dhist monk floating in a river unday. AFP

n on protesters.

pe said he was "following trepidation the very seri- ts" in Burma. He said he hoped that a peaceful solu- e found for the good of the

found Rangoon residents et their lives back on track avy security. Many schools reopened for the first time crackdown last week. Com- es returned to streets that blocked by barbed wire and diers.

forces also began allowing faithful to enter the sacred n and Sule pagodas, two ng points for the protests been completely sealed off five days. *AP*

Burma junta leaders paranoid, xenophobic

BANGKOK—HUNKERED DOWN IN WAR rooms hundreds of kilometers from mass protests, the aging, hardline generals in Burma (Myanmar) are known as a suspicious lot who view the West with disdain and rely on browbeaten advisers and astrologers to guide them.

Much like Burma's former kings, the military rulers see themselves as the only ones capable of governing, and their Army as the only force that can transform the country into a modern state.

Anyone questioning the junta's 45 years of supremacy—whether a lone protester or tens of thousands on the streets of Rangoon (Yangon)—is simply seen as a threat and dealt with the same brute force.

"They are moving to put down what they consider a threat to the nation," said Mary Callahan, a University of Washington expert on Burma. "I think these senior officers really believe they have done right by their country and the protesters are threatening the stability of the country and threatening what they consider the progress they brought."

Crackdown

The demonstrations are the stiffest challenge to the ruling junta in two decades. The bloody crackdown that followed last week, according to analysts, was not surprising given the long history of military leaders snuffing out all dissent since the country's independence in 1948.

For decades, the military rulers have also waged a brutal war against ethnic groups in which soldiers have razed villages, raped women and killed innocent civilians—atrocities that continue to this day.

Since the 1980s, the military rulers have taken aim at prodemocracy activists, detaining and torturing thousands of political prisoners, including prodemocracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest for almost 12 of the past 18 years.

When hundreds of thousands of citizens took to the streets peacefully in 1988, the military opened fire, killing as many as 3,000.

According to David Mathieson, a consultant with Human Rights Watch in Thailand, the problem of Burma's generals is that "they don't listen to their own population. They honestly think they are the only ones capable of doing this."

Senior Gen. Than Shwe, a career military officer who cut his teeth fighting ethnic insurgencies, embodies the regime he heads. Holding the top leadership post since 1992, he is regularly on the front pages of state media in his drab military uniform.

"He commands loyalty. He seems like the archetypal soldier," said Razali Ismail, a former UN special envoy to Burma who has met Than Shwe numerous times. "He believes himself to be very much a patriot, a nationalist. He speaks often about the sacrifices that he and his generation and his soldiers have made."

Described by Western diplomats who have met him as humorless, stiff and xenophobic, Than Shwe rarely says anything in public except at the annual Armed Forces Day—an ostentatious display featuring as many as 15,000 troops and the latest military hardware from China, India and Russia.

This year, the 74-year-old general used the occasion to warn that the nation still faces danger from "powerful countries" that are trying to weaken the military.

"They will try to sow the seeds of discord and dissension not only among national races but also within each particular ethnic group in various spheres such as religion, ideologies, social classes," he said.

Increasingly bizarre

In recent years, as his health has declined, Than Shwe's behavior has become increasingly bizarre, diplomats and analysts said. Almost overnight, he moved the capital in 2005 to an isolated jungle outpost 400 kilometers north of Rangoon and named it Naypyitaw or "Royal City."

To mark his first Armed Forces Day there, Tan Shwe built gigantic statues of former Burmese kings, a Western diplomat recalled, speaking on condition of anonymity. "He has regal pretensions."

These days, Than Shwe's declining health has forced him to remain mostly in Naypyitaw where he depends on cowed junior officers and even his astrologer for guidance, analyst Larry Jagan and others said.

One of his few trips outside the capital was to his daughter's wedding last year in Rangoon, which angered many Burmese because the affair cost US$300,000 and the couple received wedding gifts worth US$50 million, according to Irrawaddy, a respected online magazine covering Burmese affairs. *AP*

hai today

ries" at the Shanghai International Convention Center.

She will attend other official engagements before proceeding to Shandong for a port visit in the afternoon.

From there, Ms Arroyo and her party on board a chartered Philippine Airlines flight will proceed to India for a three-day state visit.

Investment opportunities

Sanchez said Chinese businessmen were still pushing through with their investments in the Philippines, and Ms Arroyo's visit here as keynote speaker of the PBIF was a good avenue to further entice Chinese investments.

"Last year alone, the economic growth rate of Shanghai was double digits, and that being the case, the Shanghai government has really made it a policy to encourage their businessmen to invest overseas. That is why it is very important for us now to present the investment opportunities in the Philippines," Sanchez said.

In fact, Sanchez said the PBIF conference, where Yap and Favila would have a video presentation of the investment opportunities in the Philippines, was requested by the Chinese businessmen themselves.

Upon hearing that Ms Arroyo would keynote the gathering, the number of participants ballooned to 300 from the initial 100 CEOs of top Chinese corporations here.

Two-way trade

"So this is what the forum is all about and we have no less than the head of state encouraging Shanghainese and Chinese businessmen to invest in the Philippines. I think we can expect very good outcomes from this forum," Sanchez said.

She said Chinese businessmen had expressed interest in investment opportunities in business process outsourcing, mining, transportation, tourism and agricultural products, particularly Philippine bananas.

The Philippines and China equally benefit from two-way trade valued last year at over $1 billion, she said.

So far, Chinese-Filipino businesses who have invested here are Tan's firms, Bench, Jollibee and Liwayway Holdings Company Limited, which has over 100 varieties of snack foods including the famous Oishi brand.

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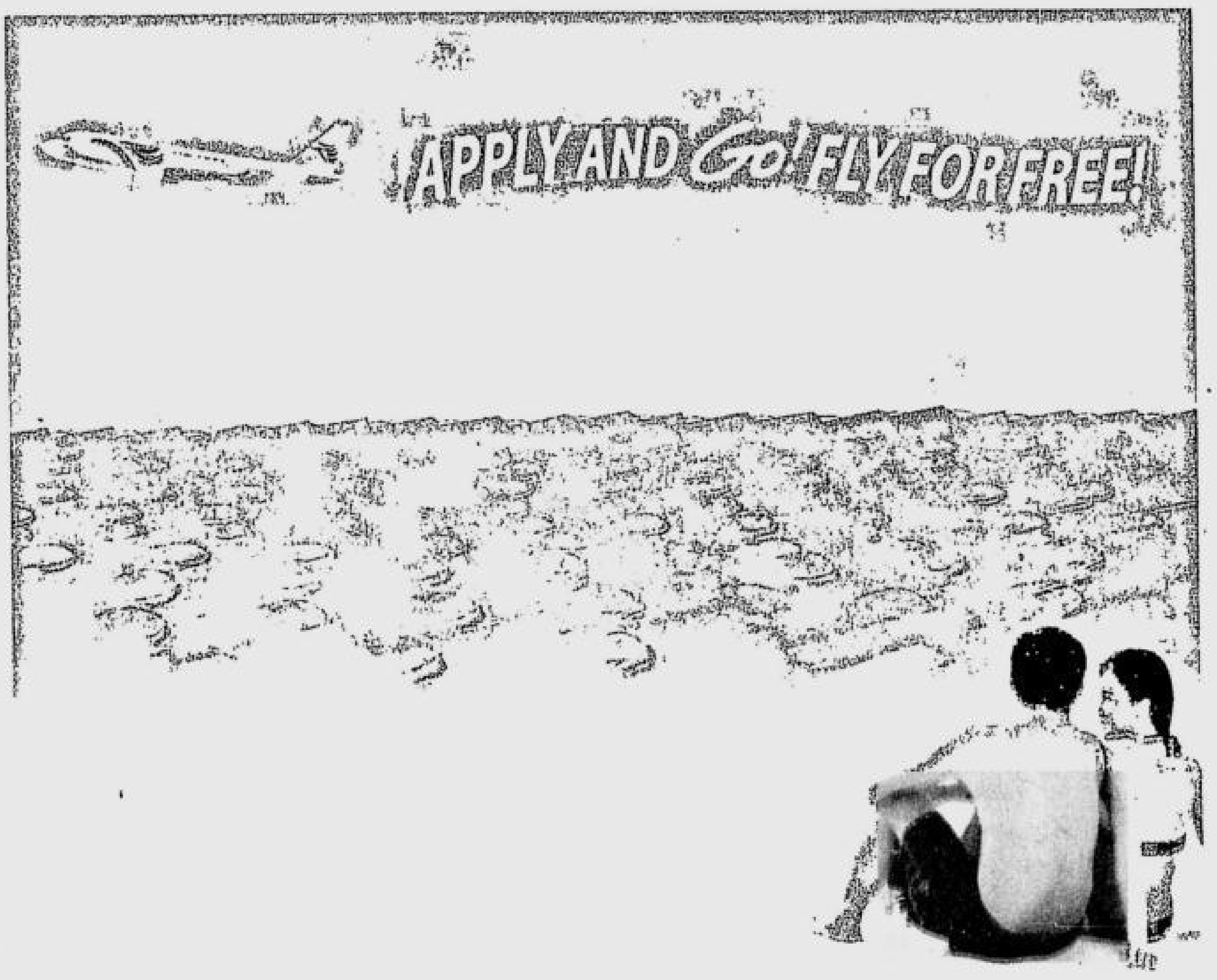
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Handle with care

EDITORIAL

AFTER REPEATEDLY VOWING NOT TO DO IT because it would be "tantamount to surrender and an admission of guilt," Benjamin Abalos resigned yesterday as chairman of the Commission on Elections. Citing the adverse media reports that have hounded him in connection with the $329-million ZTE contract to build a national broadband network, Abalos said he was resigning "to spare the Comelec from the vicious, maliciously concocted attacks on my person" and save Congress "from engaging in a complicated and long drawn-out impeachment process that would inevitably take its toll on the nation."

His resignation, he said, "should dispel claims" of his detractors that he would be calling in "so-called political debts" to avoid impeachment and belie suspicions that the Arroyo administration "is out to protect me and my incumbency."

Abalos has been accused of brokering the deal for ZTE, which critics have charged to be grossly overpriced. Jose de Venecia III, the son and namesake of the Speaker whose firm first offered to establish the NBN at no cost to the government, claimed that Abalos offered him $10 million to give up his bid and got First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo to order him to "back off" the project. Chairman Romulo Neri of the Commission on Higher Education said he also was offered P200 million by Abalos to approve the project when he was still at the helm of the National Economic and Development Authority. De Venecia, Neri and at least two other Cabinet members have attested to Abalos' presence in several meetings, here and in China, where the NBN project was being discussed with ZTE officials.

Abalos, however, has consistently disclaimed any knowledge of the NBN project and denied brokering the contract for ZTE and offering any bribes to anyone. He said all of his dealings with the ZTE officials were limited to playing golf and accommodating their requests to hold meetings at his golf club in Mandaluyong.

But even if he accused his accusers of having perjured themselves at the Senate hearing last Wednesday, it was clear that Abalos has lost the credibility contest. Neri's testimony prompted Iloilo Vice Gov. Rolex Suplico to file an impeachment complaint the following day, which was immediately endorsed by three members of the House of Representatives.

Three was, of course, a long way from the magic number of 80 votes needed to send the case to the Senate, as Abalos himself pointed out. And it seemed like a very long shot that the House and the Senate could wrap up the case in the four months remaining before his tenure expired. Still Abalos must have figured that the risk was not worth taking, and so he decided to do the one thing that would extinguish it: resignation.

But while he has avoided what could have been a very public impeachment hearing and trial, Abalos is not out of the woods yet. The Senate is still bent on continuing its investigation of the ZTE scandal. Some groups are also planning to charge him before the Office of the Ombudsman. Despite his resignation, opposition senators and his critics are not about to give Abalos a break. On the contrary, they can be expected to keep up the pressure, hoping that he will break and sing out the names of other powerful individuals who might have been involved in this worsening scandal.

His lawyer, Gabriel Villareal, has hinted that if pushed to the wall, Abalos might be forced to talk. When asked if Abalos would reveal certain matters that would be damaging to others now that he is out of office, Villareal said they would see how this affair plays out, adding that they would "cross the bridge when we get there."

That should keep many officials near the Pasig River sleepless in the coming days and weeks. They have to think of ways to keep Abalos away from that bridge, after they allowed Neri to pin him down on the bribery charge. Abalos is widely believed to keep a few dark secrets, and they are not just about the ZTE deal and offers of multimillion-dollar payoffs. He needs to be handled with care, like a strong and volatile explosive.

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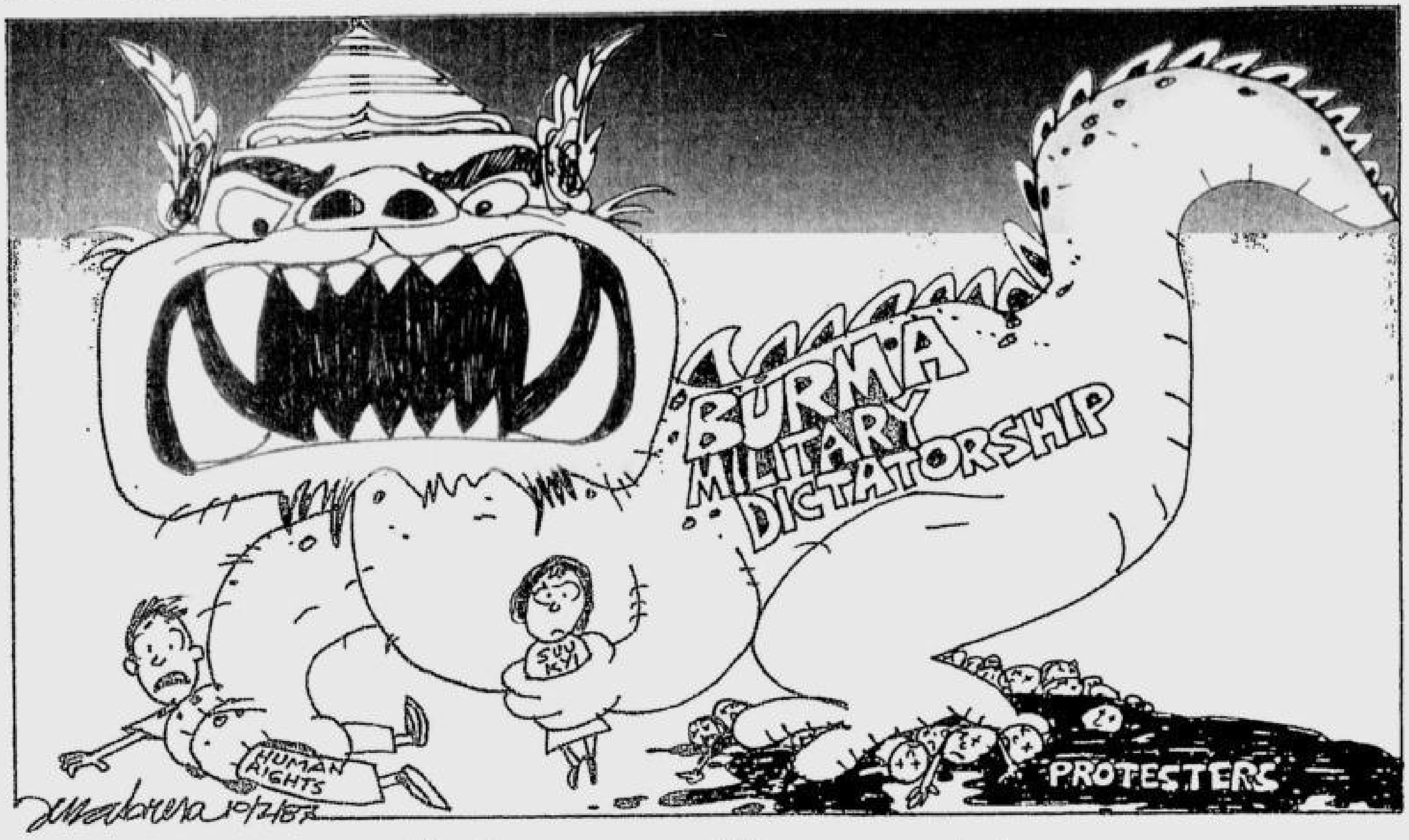

'A throne of bayonets'

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE VIEWPOINT COLUMN "SAFFRON REvolt" (INQUIRER, 9/27/07) stirred reactions from Filipinos abroad, even as the clubbing of unarmed pro-democracy demonstrators turned Burma from "a land of smiles and tea shops" into an Orwellian nation of bloodied monasteries that doubled as concentration camps, locking in Buddhist monks.

"You wrote that the blood-stained track record of Uzbekistan and Burma (show) that happy endings are not guaranteed for all people power *golpes*," writer Isabel Escoda e-mailed from Hong Kong. "What about China's Tiananmen Square?"

Sorry for the oversight, given the eerie resemblances. Like the 1988 Burmese carnage, the Tiananmen Square Massacre, in 1999, left between 2,000 to 3,000 dead, the Chinese Red Cross reported. Burmese and Chinese demonstrators flayed the corruption of their rulers. They pressed for democratic freedoms.

China then, and Burma now, reaped widespread international condemnation. But Jose Ma. Sison and Rep. Crispin Beltran cheered the Tiananmen slaughter. That trauma moulds Beijing's tip-toe policy on Burma today.

In a letter to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, University of Arizona's Hecky Villanueva urged "the Philippines, with its history of People Power, (to) … lead the way, in Asean, in asking the Burmese junta to stop the atrocities …. Urge the Burmese junta to stop its violence now, please."

Asean foreign ministers did express "revulsion" at the crackdown. So has President Macapagal-Arroyo. The junta's promise, to Asean, that it will hew to a "road map to democracy" has proved a farce. Is expulsion next?

Burma is a pariah abroad. Losing legitimacy at home, by battering "normalcy" into the streets through brute force, matters little to Burma's xenophobic generals. But suppression changed the dynamics between two of Burma's largest institutions: the military and the Buddhist monks, the New York Times noted. This change will play out in the days ahead. Stability on Asean's flanks, meanwhile, has become more brittle with a regime perched, as what Sen. Jose Diokno once said, "on a throne of bayonets."

Some generals in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia are deluded that they're anointed "protectors" of the state. "In Burma, soldiers are taught they're an elite class, entitled to special respect," noted British Broadcasting Corporation. "Anyone who opposes them is an enemy bent on returning the country to chaos and civil war. And that will almost certainly be the warped instruction given now to the troops who have shot at unarmed monks and civilians."

Dr. Benjamin Vallejo Jr. commented on the Viewpoint column "Migrant culture" (INQUIRER, 9/25/07) that asserted: "Our *balik*-scientist program never took off." Sure, Dr. Vallejo said. "But the Department of Science and Technology can support a *balik*-scientist only for a short time. A host university, like UP … can give a living allowance of P1,000 a day for 10 days."

For P1,000 "you may find accommodation in short-time hotels ….Worse, where can a *balik* - scientist go for a decent Internet connection? The nearest Starbucks café? …. Since we are unlikely to get off the addiction from OFW remittances, the least the government can do is to engage OFWs to reinvest their skills here."

Former Business Star reporter Sem Cordinal agreed with the Viewpoint column "Avian pit stops" (INQUIRER, 9/18/07) that there are silver linings in today's patchy wildlife protection and conservation. "La Mesa watershed is one of them," he said.

Cordinal snapped a photo of "a serpent eagle roosting, on a tree, in the fringes of the La Mesa forest ecopark late August …. It was exhilarating to realize that the beautiful brown creature, perched on the branch, was unfettered wildlife that apparently made the place its habitat.

"I saw the same magnificent bird a week later, but failed to capture the moment in another picture. Perhaps, we can get more people involved in nurturing La Mesa watershed's growing value as a wildlife habitat."

Emil Sentena, Rex Rivera and Ben Llanes reacted to Viewpoint's "Cry of the widows" (INQUIRER, 9/6/07). Widows of ex-communist leaders Romulo Kintanar and Arturo Tabara filed murder charges, in the Netherlands, against Communist Party's Jose Ma. Sison for ordering the assassination of their husbands. The charges are still working their way through the Dutch judicial system.

"Joma and his cohorts … are purveyors of Mao's 'Let a thousand flowers bloom' bait, so dissidents can be taken care of by the power which 'comes from the barrel of a gun,'" Emil Sentena wrote. "I hope that the cry of the widows will no longer be just a cry in the wilderness … thanks to the Dutch!"

"Exile in the Netherlands is Joma's extreme folly … where he runs the communist insurgency here by remote control," Rex Rivera wrote. He should join his comrades in the jungles of Luzon and ensure that their "revolutionary taxes" are collected … instead of living off the welfare benefits of a democratic state.

Neither the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics nor China under Mao (after which Joma patterns his revolutionary struggle) had "democratic rights" like due process and fair trial. Is that why he's afraid to seek asylum in North Korea?

"What is intriguing is people like (Reps.) Satur Ocampo and Teddy Casiño … continue to waste government's time, people's lives and resources to advance their agenda," Ben Llanes wrote. "If these people want communism, they should move to China, North Korea or elsewhere." (Or Burma?)

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Cheek

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

YOU'VE ALMOST GOT TO ADMIRE THE cheekiness of it. That is Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo standing up on the floor of the United Nations demanding that Burma release Aung San Suu Kyi.

"This is the time for Burma to return to the path of democracy," she said. By "path of democracy" she apparently meant the Philippines, which she called "the most democratic country in our region," and specifically her rule, which she pronounced as having "no tolerance for human rights violations at home and abroad." At the time GMA made this call, the Asean had just issued an unusually strongly-worded statement expressing "revulsion" at Burma's crackdown on peaceful demonstrations.

Ferdinand Marcos too was not averse to saying the most outrageous things. Certainly, he was not averse to asserting with a straight face no human rights violations ever took place during his watch. But I do not recall him going out of his way to parade himself, particularly on the international stage, as the defender of democracy and champion of human rights, and calling on fellow dictators, who abounded at the time—courtesy of US policy to prop them up where they were friendly—to follow in his path. It was that twerp George Bush Sr. who made him out to be a defender of democracy, toasting his adherence to it while on a visit here. What can one say? Like son, like father.

Marcos, like Hitler, believed in the Big Lie, which says that the bigger the lie, the more likely people would buy it. But he did not believe in pushing it, he knew there were limits even to the Big Lie. For sheer capacity to brazen it out, this one has no peer.

The one person, of course, who has every right, reason and moral thunder to say something like that on the halls of the UN is Corazon Aquino. Cory might have had problems with human rights during her time, but they were nothing like the wholesale destruction of them today. More to the point, Cory and Suu Kyi share the same character and probably the same fate. For many years Cory led the fight against tyranny at great risk to herself and her family, enduring threat and ridicule, frustration and persecution, and finally succeeded in overthrowing it. For many years, Suu Kyi has led the fight against tyranny, enduring threat and persecution, enforced silence and house arrest, and—if the dizzying events in Burma today are any indication—will probably soon succeed in overthrowing it as well.

If GMA has led the fight against anything, I'll leave Edita Burgos, whose husband risked life and limb to restore democracy to this country, to say what it is. GMA is, of course, herself a product of People Power, like Cory and potentially Suu Kyi. This was probably the inspiration for her making a pitch for Suu Kyi—to remind the world of the fact. But GMA is not like Cory or Suu Kyi; she is, like Marcos and the Burmese junta, the opposite of them. Thankfully, she drew the line at explicitly throwing herself in the same company. Who knows? Maybe, Lupita Kashiwahara finally got an attack of conscience and realized she didn't have to trample her brother's grave or spit on her sister-in-law's face just to prop up the unproppable.

GMA should be thankful the Burmese foreign minister wasn't there to ask questions about what exactly she has done to her country that they should emulate. Indeed, she should be thankful Edita Burgos, who means to bring Jonas' case all the way to the UN, wasn't there when she said, "We have no tolerance for human rights violations here and abroad."

But in the end, the cheekiness is not without its useful purpose, compelling us to ask not just what democratic lessons Burma can learn from us today but how far we are still removed from a country like Burma. Look at our two countries and what you'll see is not a contrast, it is a strong resemblance. Almost point by point, the Burmese foreign minister might have had a beef with the Philippine representative had he been there.

Free Suu Kyi? The foreign minister might have said: "Why don't you free Ariel Querubin et al. first?" Suu Kyi's crime is demanding an end to a military junta, one that rules without a mandate from the people. Querubin et al.'s crime is demanding an end to a civilian junta that has not been elected by the people. A coup wrought by ballot is no less than a coup wrought by bullet. Both are illegitimate.

The Burmese junta's crackdown on peaceful demonstrations is revolting? The Burmese foreign minister might have said: "**Your** crackdown on peaceful demonstrations is revolting." Lest we forget, until the Supreme Court scrapped it a couple of years ago, we had a fascist law called "Calibrated Preemptive Response," which allowed the police to bludgeon the heads of demonstrators; along with that other fascist law forbidding any public official, civilian or military, from testifying that GMA stole the vote. To this day, those laws are either being invoked or used to threaten.

Stop the killings in Burma? Ah, but there the Burmese foreign minister might have had a field day. Truly, you've got to marvel at the gall of someone who can say she will not abide human rights violations but has made her country second only to Iraq as the deadliest place for journalists—never mind that she has made her country the most corrupt in Asia. A country that the journalists and human rights organizations of the world have attached a warning sign to, lit in neon, that says: "Be a reporter or activist at your own risk: A culture of impunity reigns here."

Right now, I'm wondering when Cory will come out in a local or global forum to make a call, one that will truly resound across the world, for Suu Kyi to be freed. And, maybe, add a thing or two about freeing this country too from the clutches of a Burmese-type regime.

Cory sought to convince Abalos to do a Chavit?

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IN THE RESIGNATION OF COMELEC CHAIR BENjamin Abalos, my heart went out, not to him (who has always been a tough fighter) but to his wife Cora and son Mayor Ben-Hur Abalos. The tears they shed revealed how much the attacks the embattled Abalos received from the media and the senators have affected the family. Cora Abalos is a beautiful woman despite her years, but yesterday dark circles ringed her eyes as she publicly lamented how unfair everything had been to her husband. Abalos had publicly said that the suffering of his wife over allegations of his "sexcapades" was what hurt him most. Mayor Ben-Hur has hardly said a word throughout this crisis, but yesterday he wept quietly. I knew and dealt with this young lawyer when he was in the House of Representatives, and I know that now as mayor, he has a good program for Mandaluyong. Unfortunately, in such crises, it's the families that really get hurt.

I'm glad to note that former UP law dean and INQUIRER columnist Raul Pangalangan last week differentiated between extraneous and valid issues in the ZTE scandal. Among the extraneous, he opined, are the allegations of Abalos' "sexcapades." I cannot agree more, especially because the charges cannot be proved. Sadly, however, this point seems to be completely lost today.

* * *

I agree with Ben Abalos' decision to resign—it's best for the nation, the Comelec and his suffering family. This now gives him an opportunity to fight the predictable charges in the courts, where he has a better chance to clear his name. In the chambers of Congress, some people are out for his blood. By the way, Cory Aquino trooped to the Abalos residence yesterday afternoon and it's not hard to deduced that it was to convince him to do a Chavit against GMA.

* * *

The groups that have been working hard to oust GMA are now hot after CHEd Chair Romulo Neri, after all the hyping about how he would spill the beans on her proved inutile. The same groups that had filed two impeachment complaints against her, advocated her resignation in 2005, and instigated several coup attempts against her are now after Neri's scalp for invoking "executive privilege." Frankly, I'm shocked at the incredible browbeating and third-degree treatment of a Cabinet member by the tri-media. At the Senate, Neri was so sick that his UP classmate, Senate President Manuel Villar, had to prod his colleagues to let him go after 14 hours.

* * *

In this connection, some people asked me what I thought of Star columnist Jarius Bondoc's revelation, yesterday, of what former Neda Chair Neri allegedly told him in April about the conversations he had with President Macapagal-Arroyo on the ZTE deal. Neri had refused to divulge them at the Senate hearing, invoking executive privilege. Bondoc angrily said that since Neri doesn't want to do so, he would do that for him, never mind that doing so could stoke another controversy. Journalists constantly receive all kinds of information about controversial issues and we have to weigh them very carefully, including how to handle them. It all depends on the particular journalist.

How do I feel about Bondoc's exposé yesterday? If I were in his shoes I wouldn't have disclosed the details of that conversation with Neri—clearly because it was privileged communication; instead, if I truly believe in the cause of stopping the deal, I would look for ways to virtually disclose the same things in another way, as he had already done in many columns. But on that particular conversation, I would feel compelled to respect its confidentiality, especially since it is the crux of the controversy. It's unfair to Neri as circumstances between that April conversation and today have changed radically. Besides it's obvious that he didn't seek Neri's permission. But then, columnists are different from **one another and have different values.**

* * *

Speaking of Senate Chief Villar, Cecile Alvarez and I had a fun time interviewing him for our Sunday 9:15 p.m. program at dzRH. In a rags-to-riches story replete with human interest, he spoke about his formative years, his life in a brood of nine children in a poor family, how he courted his wife, Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, and how he came to build up a fortune that's now legend in the housing sector. We had a good laugh recalling how he used to hitch a ride after his MBA class at the UP with my husband (then on leave from the military) because he had no vehicle of his own. Few people would know that Villar was born in 1949 to a simple family in Moriones, Tondo, the son of a lowly government employee named Manuel Villar Sr., and seafood dealer Aling Cora. At a young age, he began helping his mother sell shrimp and fish at Divisoria, waking up at 5 a.m. daily. He continued to do this to support himself all through college, while courting a wealthy classmate named Cynthia. "I learned entrepreneurship early from my mother," said Villar, who confessed to his admiration for business Chinese merchants. That early he vowed to become an entrepreneur.

* * *

The break came when Villar resigned from a brief stint as an accountant at SGV after graduation. The restaurant where he was regularly delivering stocks of shrimp and fish was unable to pay him, so he printed out "meal tickets" which he persuaded the owners to honor, selling them at a discounted rate to office workers. It took him one year to liquidate these receivables. Working briefly as a financial analyst at the Private Development Corporation of the Philippines, where his job was to sell World Bank loans (for which there were few takers), he soon became convinced that he could make it on his own. Availing himself of one of those loans, Villar sank an initial P10,000 in 1975 to buy two reconditioned trucks and started his own sand-and-gravel business in Las Piñas, where the girl he was courting lived. This business gave him a ringside seat into the fabulous housing business where his keen instincts for timing came to be quite an asset.

Abalos steps out of the picture

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE BEST THAT CAN BE SAID ABOUT THE RESignation yesterday of Commission on Elections Chairman Benjamin Abalos is that it was long overdue.

Long before last May's elections, indeed upon the voiding of the computerization contract by no less than the Supreme Court, civil society groups had already called for a revamp of the entire Board of Commissioners of the Comelec, starting with the chairman. These calls for their resignation were ignored wholesale by the Comelec leadership, and any moves for their impeachment were immediately squelched, with no politician willing to court the poll body's ire so close to an election.

And when the Supreme Court saw fit to remind the Ombudsman to carry out its order that charges be filed against those involved in the anomalous computerization contract, the anti-graft body came up with the unique—not to say, "rather bizarre"—conclusion that while there was indeed a crime committed, nobody was responsible for it.

The conduct and counting of votes of the May 2007 elections only added more fodder to the popular perception that the Comelec, led by its chairman, was not up to the task of ensuring clean, honest and orderly elections. The prolonged canvassing of votes, especially of the tail-ender senatorial candidates, only led to more suspicion regarding the rumored quid pro quo arrangements being set up.

And yet, despite the adverse rulings of the Supreme Court and of mounting criticism about his performance as head of the Comelec, Abalos hung tough, and everybody fully expected him to ride out the storm until his retirement.

So what is it about the ZTE contract and his role as alleged broker between the government and the Chinese supplier that spooked Abalos enough to convince him to hand in his overdue resignation?

* * *

TRUE, Abalos in his statement said the Senate hearings and the fevered media coverage of the entire scandal had taken a toll on him and his family, and he no longer wanted to subject his wife and children to any more distress, especially in the midst of a threatened impeachment.

Certainly, Abalos is vulnerable. His role in the proposed broadband project, despite his protestations of innocence, is unseemly at best. As head of a constitutional body, he had no business meddling in a transaction between a government department and a foreign supplier. And the testimonies of two witnesses—Joey de Venecia and Commission on Higher Education Chairman Romulo Neri—that he had dangled bribes or commissions before them, put him in even worse light.

Critics had suggested that any impeachment attempt would not prosper simply because Abalos knew too many secrets about too many elected officials. But perhaps that is also the reason he was prevailed upon to resign as Comelec chief. It smacks of a neat political solution to a messy political tangle. An impeachment complaint would have pitted the forces of President Macapagal-Arroyo (who were expected to protect Abalos) against the still-formidable forces of Speaker Joe de Venecia. The only question remaining is what rewards were offered the former Comelec chair in exchange for stepping out of the picture and heading off a bloody confrontation.

The Black-and-White Movement, through spokesperson Leah Navarro, issued a statement in which it expressed the hope that Abalos' resignation "paves the way for genuine electoral reform." The movement also said that it would insist on a "solid choice of (a) replacement" and a transparent and open process of selection.

* * *

TRAFFIC along the South Expressway prevented my attending the book launching last Sept. 26 of "Araneta: A Love Affair with God and Country" by Maria Lina Araneta Santiago. The launch was held at the White Cross compound, a children's home which started out as a shelter for children whose parents were recovering from TB, and which now offers residential care and temporary shelter for abandoned children as well as day care services.

Though at heart a family chronicle, or as its author describes it: "a story of passion and romance, loyalty, betrayal, politics and family," the sheer scope of "Araneta" transforms it into a historical account of the period from the 1800s to the late 1980s, covering the revolution against Spain, the betrayal of the Philippine revolution by its leaders as well as by the new colonizers, the Americans, the ordeal of World War II and the early years of Philippine democracy.

Telling the story of her wealthy and philanthropic clan, the Aranetas as well as the Lopezes and Ledesmas on her mother side, Araneta-Santiago uses the lives of her grandfather, Gregorio, her father Salvador, as well as her mother Victoria who founded White Cross (with several friends) in 1937, to discuss as well issues ranging from religion to history, politics to economics, and even architecture and fashion.

* * *

THE TEXT is complemented as well by more than 300 photos, among them the first in Amorsolo's series of "First Baptism" paintings which was destroyed during the War, and portraits of Manila's renowned beauties, among them Elvira Baltazar Rufino, Pacita "Nitang" Lopez, Ester Araneta, Aurora Recto, Josefina Cojuangco, Mary Arroyo Montilla, Isabelita de los Reyes Barreto and Victoria Araneta.

For those interested in architecture, an important landmark that still stands today is the White Cross building with a frieze done by Italian sculptor, Francesco Monti. This Art Deco building was designed by National Artist Pablo Antonio and constructed in 1938.

There are pictures as well of "Victoneta," the home of Salvador and Victoria Araneta, which was designed by three architects: Juan Arellano, Domingo Lerma and Andres Luna San Pedro.

Proceeds from the sale of the book will go to the repair and maintenance of White Cross.

The 'bully' in Mar Roxas

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

I TOOK PART IN A ROUSING THREE-HOUR FOrum on media ethics at De La Salle Lipa last week; there were so many questions we didn't have time to answer them all. I had described a journalist's fundamental moral obligation as one of fidelity—to the situation (or the news event), to the "language" of journalism (the craft), ultimately to the journalist's conscience. One question, in particular, stood out, not least because it conflated all three dimensions.

A discussion on the sensational coverage of the seven-year-old girl found dead and stuffed in a suitcase reflected the dilemma that I said many journalists experience when they handle rape stories or stories about minors. Inevitably I made a reference to the "Nicole" case, where the name of the victim was protected. This led one student by the name of Kristine to ask: Why name minors who are rape victims just because they are dead?

* * *

"Sometimes my passion is mistaken for anger."

Sen. Richard Gordon is still smarting from the flak he has received over his run-in with Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano during last Wednesday's Senate hearing and his questioning of [just resigned] Commission on Elections chair Benjamin Abalos.

The continuing argument with Cayetano, the blue ribbon committee chair, still riles him, he said, because it involves Sec. Romulo Neri's unwarranted claim of executive privilege—and the distinct possibility that Neri would decline to make a second appearance at the Senate. "They let him get away ... The chair should have decided. The chairman let him get away with it."

Gordon was the committee chair who detained PCGG chief Camilo Sabio last year for refusing to testify before the Senate. Sabio sued, but the Supreme Court sustained Gordon and the Senate.

"The guy doesn't even know his rules," Gordon said, and of course he was talking about Cayetano, not Sabio. As for his grilling of Abalos, Neri's alleged briber, he repeated what, in my view, is a question with unimpeachable logic: "Obviously the poisoned fruit has been distributed. Doesn't it stand to reason [that] others have also been offered [a bite]?"

* * *

Eminent economist Partha Dasgupta of the University of Cambridge is giving a lecture at the Asian Development Bank tomorrow, as part of the ADB's Distinguished Speakers series. He has, for the last decade or so, advanced the view that neither gross domestic product nor the Human Development Index provide an accurate measure of sustainable development. Interesting stuff, but I'm no economist; I am more interested in his work (almost an avocation) on the theory of voting—and how it may apply to our continuing struggle, with or without Abalos, to truly reflect the people's will.

* * *

At a dinner with bankers the other night, the way the senators conducted themselves during the hearings was quite naturally the recurring topic of conversation. Sen. Loren Legarda was singled out for praise, for asking solid, resonant questions without fanfare. Co-chair Sen. Mar Roxas was also cited, for his obvious facility with numbers and concepts.

I must confess, though, to a certain tentativeness about Roxas' performance. Yes, he certainly seems to have done his homework. Of all the senators present (the blue ribbon alone has 17 members), he alone seems to have the consistent benefit of that old Ramos mantra, "complete staff work." (How complete? Here's an alternative gauge: Just about an hour after he tangled with Assistant Secretary Lorenzo Formoso, on the government's estimate of the savings it will generate from the ZTE deal, his news release, complete with his quotes, was already in my e-mail inbox—and in dozens of other journalists' inboxes too. The time stamp was 6:59 p.m.)

With his investment banking background, Roxas also knows enough to debate, not only economic policy, but the theoretical framework or philosophical assumption informing a given policy. Witness the altercation with Neri on whether financials should be included in the project evaluation. When was the last time a senator brought Modigliani (the economist Franco, Google tells us, not the artist Amedeo) into a legislative discussion?

* * *

But it is precisely those bullying altercations with Formoso ("This answer offends me, because it is designed to obscure reality") and Neri ("Wow, that is a stunning admission") that give me pause.

Like many others watching the hearings, I shared Roxas' frustration with the witnesses' often unsatisfactory answers. But Formoso and Neri weren't the only ones being evasive. Formoso's boss, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, was a study in ambiguity. Abalos, true to form, was slickness personified. Where was Roxas' indignation then?

Indeed, after Roxas wiped Formoso off the Senate floor, he faced Mendoza and said: "And now I turn to Secretary Mendoza, whom I always greet with a smile, since we were together in the Cabinet" (or words to that noxious effect).

I am reminded of Dean Raul Pangalangan's column the other week, where he spoke of a "class divide" in the treatment of witnesses. We believe the Clarissa Ocampos, not the Ador Mawanays. With his treatment of Mendoza and Abalos (both true sources of power in the current administration), Roxas has shown us that there is a power divide too. And we only lash out at those without.

* * *

The Christian Family Movement (http://users.philonline.com/~cfmphils) is holding its 29th national convention at the Eco-Tech Center in Lahug, Cebu City from October 26 to 28. A formation seminar precedes the convention. It includes, tellingly, a session on "Understanding Psychological Incapacity," that marriage voider. Ah, a true sign of the times.

* * *

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Reborn

YOUNG BLOOD

Remi Karen M. Velasco

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

WILD WRESTLING... "COUNTRY ORCHESTRA"... WARM rainy days... and more in Ilocos!

Before all those, I had been restless for weeks, and I could not "contain" myself and my senses.

(I am a film freak—I cannot live without watching movies within a week; I am guilty of being a "shop-a-holic"—I always decline to wear the same clothing, even accessories); I have an "unchoosy" tongue which can take pleasure or tolerate almost all kinds of tastes and cuisines); and, I always crave for something fizzy.)

In an effort to get hold of myself, I listened to my feet, and ended up in a shopping mall. I watched a movie with my sister, went shopping like we regularly do, and ate at a newly opened restaurant—but to no avail. It was one of those rare moments when I had misread my whims. My senses were complaining. My eyes were bored. I was so worn-out that even my tongue seemed to have lost its taste.

I was just so lucky that my sister decided to spend her weekend in Ilocos, and she took me and our younger brother along.

Wild wrestling

The wrestling site is an open but secluded place. You won't think it's a wrestling site until you "merge" with it. It's an hour-and-a half drive from Batac, Ilocos Norte.

On the way, we were already feeling the fatigue of the nine-hour travel from Manila by land. As we stepped on the shore of Saud Beach in Pagudpud, we heard our "opponent" howling, letting out a squeal every minute, itching to begin the jousts.

Only a few were there to witness and take part. The winds frantically wailed while the sky "watched." We were immediately ready to rumble.

In one "corner"—onshore—were the jumpy visitors in trunks and swimsuits. In the other—offshore—were the mighty waves. We jumped into the giant waves seven to twelve feet high. The waves pushed us back to the shore, then dragged us into the sea and hauled us back again onto the shore. We were smacked down. First round over.

Second round. We gathered our strength for another wrestling with the powerful waves. But we were knocked down. The sea raised its waves and trampled us on the shore where they left us lying and breathing heavily. We dared the sea and shouted: "More, more waves." And the sea playfully obliged, sending us more waves as the wind grew stronger and the waves wilder.

It was a three-hour, action-packed bout. We enjoyed the match and I'm pretty sure the unbeatable sea and the spectator-sky had a wild time too! The contest had finally revived my senses.

The sea redefines being at Pagudpud. Beaching and swimming are not the mid-year challenge. It's wrestling—wrestling with the sea waves, that is.

"Country orchestra"

The wrestling gave us a day of laughter and assured our battered bodies with a good night's sleep at the house of my sister's friend. The house sits snugly at the edge of an abundant farm in Batac. The following morning, we woke up to another surprise—a melodic rendition by an "country orchestra." The rooster began with its "tilaok," and the gentle winds swayed the trees to "tic" and "crick, even as the leaves rustled. And then we heard the cows moo, the dogs bark and the goats "meeeh-eh." Adding to the symphony, the birds chirped and cats meowed for a merry morning.

For a person who usually wakes up gearing for the hustle and bustle of city living, that was a marvelous orchestric performance. In the city, it's very rare that we hear a musical composition by Nature.

Warm rainy days

The afternoon was rainy, but it was not enough to give us the blues. The "papaitan" and "dinengdeng na gulay" easily compensated for the cold weather, especially that it was served with the Ilocanos' natural warmth.

But a special meal would be incomplete without the famed Ilocos *longanisa, bagnet and empanada*.

The longanisa is crispy on the outside and juicy inside.

I used to wonder why "bagnet" is among the more popular fare. In my Ilocos sojourn, I discovered its excellent crunchiness, not like that of the "chicharon's," which is too crunchy even for a "lechon kawali." Whola, the "bagnet crunch" is between the *chicharon's* and *lechon kawali's*.

It was the best *empanada* that I ever tasted with its delicious mix of fried egg, ground beef and pork, potato cubes. Soak it in black Ilocos' vinegar, it's perfect!

For dessert, you don't want to miss the "*special bibingka*." It's as if some "magic formula" is being used to perfect its sweetness.

Boastful Nature

I thought that the "wrestling" with the sea waves and the yummy cuisine were all there was to Ilocos.

In Currimao, a 30-minute drive from Batac, there was a wide stretch of white and grayish coral formations that opened to a magnificent view of the clean and clear sea. As we were traveling to Vigan, we were tailed by a mountain range all lush and vibrant. More than an hour into our trip, it was still with us—a very relaxing, very rejuvenating sight.

Nature gave me back my senses. I felt refreshed, renewed and even reborn!

Remi Karen M. Velasco, 25, is a freelance writer and researcher.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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Polls afford barangays a space to break away from trapo hold

ANG KAPATIRAN PARTY (AKP) IS calling on all barangay members to know, understand and actively participate in reforming the direction and manner of governing their community for the common good.

Sec. 384 of the Local Government Code of 1991 (RA No. 7160), which took effect on Jan. 1, 1992, provides: "Role of the Barangay—As a basic political unit, the barangay serves as the primary unit of government policy, plans, programs, projects and activities in the community and as a forum wherein the collective views of the people may be expressed, crystallized and considered, and where disputes may be amicably settled." The barangay, the smallest political unit of government, has its own territory, resources and government; and its own three branches of government, the executive, legislative and judicial.

Despite the very noble intention of Sec. 385 of the Local Government Code, most barangays in our country have fallen under the control of traditional politicians who only promote their personal interest. This is despite the provision under Sec. 38, Article VI, of the Omnibus Election Code, which states that no political party, organization or group shall intervene in the nomination and election of any barangay candidate.

It is very sad to note that the marginalized members of our barangays are kept unaware of the role of the barangay, so that they are easier to manipulate, especially during local and national elections.

Our barangays receive substantial funding. In 2004, the total share of the barangays just from Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) amounted to P28 billion. Aside from this, the barangays are also entitled to 25 percent of real property taxes, 35 percent of natural wealth extraction (e.g., lahar), 50 percent of community tax (*cedula* or residence certificate) and 100 percent of fees, documentary stamps, etc. generated from within their respective territories. But majority of barangay members are kept in the dark about how much funds are received by their barangay and how they are spent. They need to be aware and understand that they are legally empowered to get involved in running the affairs of their barangay.

For the upcoming October barangay elections, let us all actively participate and vote in accordance with our conscience to stop the exploitation of the poor and the oppression of the weak. As barangay members, let us choose only candidates who are accountable, transparent, well-informed, independent-minded and who practice good governance. Only then can our barangays eventually function independently and effectively as the primary unit of government in the community wherein the collective views of the people are freely expressed and considered.

We have to remove the control of traditional politicians over barangays before we can start reversing the vicious cycle of graft and corruption to eventually solve the problem of poverty in our country.

—RENATO H. PERONILLA,
president,
Ang Kapatiran Party (AKP),
angkapatiranparty@yahoo.com

Suspended RP-China agriculture deal: simple but scary

AGRICULTURE SECRETARY Arturo Yap's decision to suspend the RP-China agreements that will allow the lease of more than a million hectares of agricultural land is welcome. But it also rings hollow in the ears and should be placed under serious scrutiny. (INQUIRER, 9/25/07)

First of all, Yap cited as ground his desire to have more time to consult the stakeholders. If public consultation was so important to him, then he should have disclosed the contents of the agreements during the negotiation stage. That is what he is mandated by the Constitution to do, nothing less. More than simply withholding the contents of the agreements, he even misrepresented their true nature, at one point calling them "private contracts" even when he himself is the signatory on behalf of the Department of Agriculture.

Second, government officials who have entered into anomalous and unconstitutional contracts should not be allowed to escape liability after they suspend the contract when they are backed into a corner or when the public outcry becomes strident. With the JPEPA (Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement) and ZTE scandals in the spotlight, it appears that it is fast becoming a habit of our negotiators to broker unconscionable deals in hopes of "getting away with it," even as they are ready to back off from such deals when they can't stand the heat.

Third, there should be some clarity as to what Secretary Yap means by "suspension." Note that the agreement (involving the lease of 1 million hectares of land) with Fu Hua Corporation has already been signed, thus giving rise to legal obligations, not to mention diplomatic implications. Is the agreement merely on the backburner, ready to be dusted off when public interest shall have died down? Who decides that the consultations with stakeholders are already enough?

Lastly, Yap misses the point altogether. The agreement is flawed not simply because of the failure to consult the stakeholders or because it lacks "acceptable mechanisms." The agreement is flawed because it violates fundamental constitutional principles and because it is so manifestly tilted against Philippine interests. Before the media, the good secretary can prevaricate all he wants, but the bare text of the agreement prevails over his assertions. And the agreement says that 1 million hectares of land "legally owned by the Philippines" will be leased to a corporation that is 100-percent Chinese-owned.

It's as simple as it is scary.

—JAE DE LA CRUZ, Initiatives for Dialogue and Empowerment through Alternative Legal Services Inc., 4/F MB Building, Kalayaan Avenue, Quezon City

SEN. Miriam Defensor-Santiago at the September 26 hearing

Miriam on September 26 incident: 'Twas no walkout

WE THANK THE INQUIRER FOR the kind mention of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago in its September 27 editorial.

We wish to clarify, however, that Senator Santiago did not walk out of the September 26 Senate inquiry on the ZTE-NBN agreement. She left right after speaking in the hearing because she wanted to rest. She is suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome, and thus cannot last for the whole hearing.

The senator has also formally recommended to Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano that the Senate blue ribbon committee endorse the case to the Ombudsman for preliminary investigation of the parties suspected of bribery and corruption.

—JEANIE BACONG, public affairs,
Office of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago

RP can break out of cynicism cycle

THIS IS A REACTION TO CONRADO de Quiros' September 24 column. The frustration dripping from the words of his column "Worlds and words " is understandable. Our country is gripped by a kind of cynicism which is most insidious because it says: if the system is rigged, I don't have to take responsibility.

Jeepneys stop wherever they want, thieves take whatever they want, authorities take whatever they want for the simple reason that they can get away with it.

I really don't know how, but perhaps we can start by taking time to reflect and take responsibility for our actions.

—FILEMON TANCHOCO,
fptanchoco@yahoo.com

A democracy with 'untouchables'?

I QUOTE FROM THE INQUIRER editorial "Turning Point" (9/21/07): "We will have to bide our time and wait for a plunder case to be filed against him."

Really, are we that helpless before the likes of Benjamin Abalos, Virgilio Garcillano, Jose Pidal, etc.?

In almost all the irregularities nowadays, these people, especially Jose Pidal, are involved. And yet they continue to strut on the public stage notwithstanding the howls and hoots. Talk about impunity and total absence of *delicadeza*! Are these people really that powerful that not even Congress, or the Senate, and the Supreme Court can do something to stop them?

What will happen now to the institutions they're destroying? Is our democracy really that flawed?

—JUAN PAULO ESPALLARDO,
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Impeachments hostage to 'jueteng'

UNFORTUNATELY, THE HOUSE of Representatives has made conscience, morality and shame irrelevant by looking at impeachment attempts as nothing but a numbers game.

Ah, the irrefutable influence of *jueteng*!

—AURORA RIEL,
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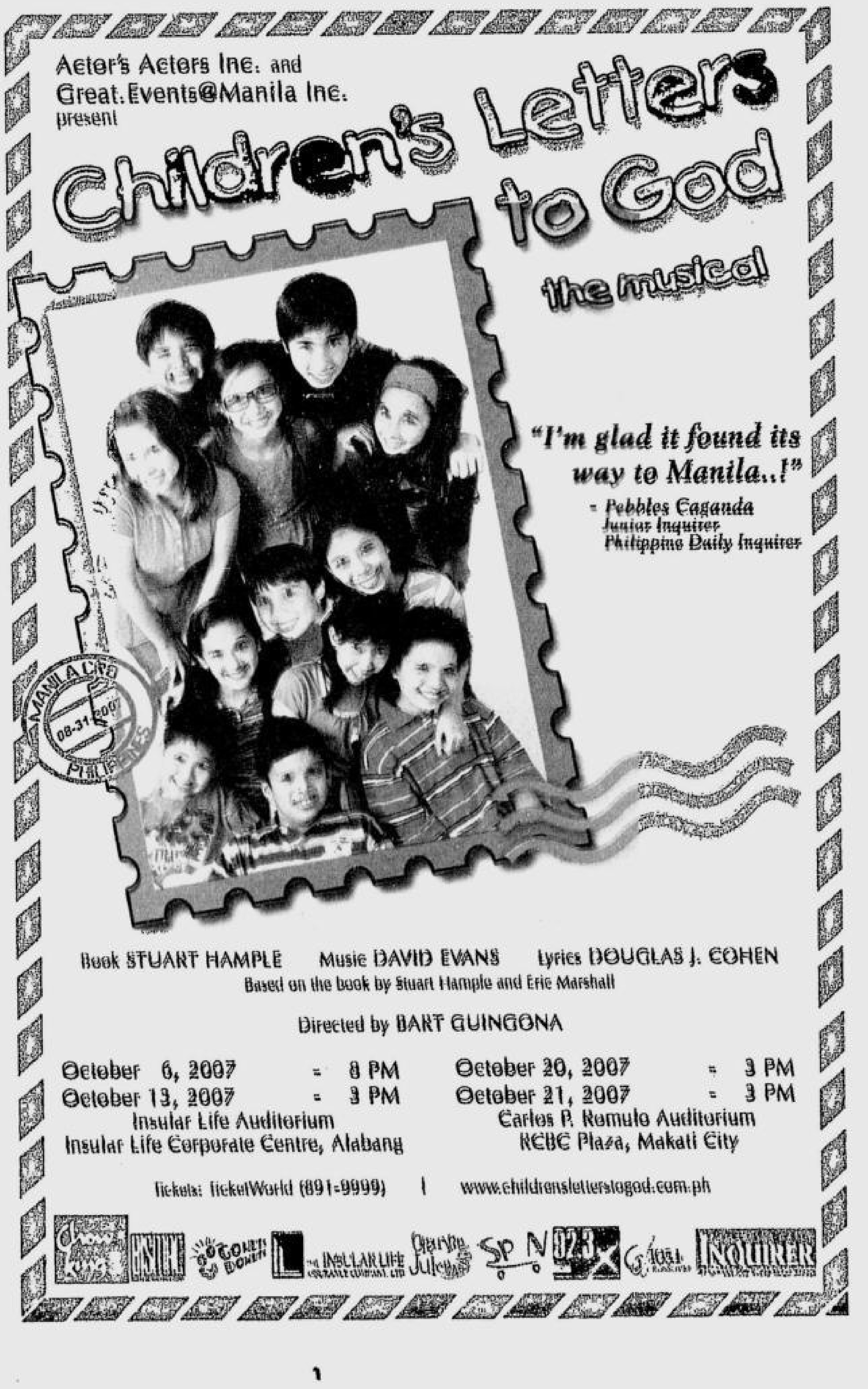

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We need real education projects, not initiatives of dubious value

THE BUDGET FOR THE CYBER education project (CEP) would be better spent on upgrading the country's dismal public education system.

Eighty-six percent of the CEP allocation would come from a P22.77-billion loan from China; the remaining 14 percent, or P3.71 billion, would come from the Philippine government. But given the dismal state of the country's basic education system, the CEP is unnecessary and would only exacerbate the country's already dire debt situation.

The Department of Education estimates that by the end of school year 2008, there would be a shortage of 1,390 classrooms, 524,237 school seats and 2,733 teachers, which would be left unmet due to lack of funds. The DepEd placed the cost of bridging these "resource gaps" at P1.5 billion, which could easily be covered just by the government's counterpart budget for the CEP. There is a further shortage of 44.2 million textbooks, which would cost some P2.8 billion to bridge.

The CEP would only worsen the country's foreign debt situation. As of end-June 2007, the national government's total debt stock hit a staggering P3.78 trillion, which means that every Filipino now owes at least P42,624.

Government now spends more for the servicing of interest payments alone (on the country's debts) than it does for education. In the proposed 2008 budget, government allocated P3,269.48 per capita for interest payments, while it allocated only P2,010.39 per capita for education.

Government can do more to improve basic education by increasing allocations for education in the national budget, hiring more teachers and bridging resource gaps in the sector than by investing in projects of questionable value.

—JENNIFER DEL ROSARIO-MALONZO,
general secretary,
Educators' Forum for Development (EFD),
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Quezon City 1103

Box too big

JUSTICE CONSUELO YNARES-Santiago denies having received money in a gift box. ("SC to look into P10-M 'bribe,'" INQUIRER, 9/25/07)

That gift-wrapped box, supposedly for Justice Santiago, must have been enormously big—maybe bigger than a *balikbayan* box. That is the only way to cram in P5 million into a single box, let alone P10 million. And the denominations must have mostly been in P1,000 bills.

The only thing in that report that could not be doubted is that the box was gift-wrapped—any size of box could be gift-wrapped.

And can any justice of any court just fire a government employee for opening a package? Civil service rules are applicable even to the Supreme Court.

Besides, I suggest that boxes and other packages addressed to any judge or justice be carefully opened or scanned by a machine. What if they contain a bomb?

—ROCKY B. DENOGA,
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Angeles wants no more of ex-mayor's sour grapes

THIS IS A REACTION TO Tonette Orejas' news report headlined "Angeles City mired in P484M debt."

If former Mayor Carmelo Lazatin wanted to project himself as an efficient and competent local chief executive, how come he left our beloved Angeles City in a financial mess? Isn't he the one who should be accountable for the mess—after all, he was the mayor for nine years—and not the incumbent mayor who has been in office for only three months?

The concerned citizens of Angeles City were so relieved that the last elections gave us a new mayor. If what Lazatin said about our new mayor, Francis Nepomuceno (his "inefficiency, incapacity and lying") were true, the latter would not have disclosed to the media and exerted any effort to resolve the problem the former left.

We have enough of Lazatin's politicking.

—ANA MARIE D. HIPOLITO,
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Angeles City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

'Thank God ...

From page A1

ing scandals. And he loved using analogies to do so.

"If you have a basket of tomatoes and you find one tomato rotten, would you throw away the entire basket?" Abalos asked during a press conference at the height of the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal in July 2005.

Garci to blame

"If there is a a rat in your house, would you burn down the entire house just to get rid of it?" he said in another interview.

Abalos always maintained that former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano acted alone in allegedly conspiring to commit fraud in the 2004 presidential election.

He later blamed Garcillano "for all this mess."

In one instance, Abalos defended Comelec regional directors accused by Senate investigation witnesses Sandra Cam and Michaelangelo Zuce of receiving P2 million each from a suspected "jueteng" lord's wife supposedly in Ms Arroyo's presence before the 2004 elections.

The "Hello Garci" wiretapping affair was to become the most enduring scandal to plague the Comelec—and the Arroyo administration.

Another scandal that cast a dark shadow over Abalos concerned efforts to automate the polls.

Mega Pacific deal

The Supreme Court voided Comelec's decision to award a P1.3-billion automation contract to Mega Pacific. A Senate report also implicated Comelec officials in the deal.

In October last year, the Ombudsman cleared him and other commissioners of all charges, citing lack of evidence.

The 1,999 automated counting machines—ordered returned by the Supreme Court but which Mega Pacific refused to accept—are still stored, unused, in the Comelec's warehouse in Manila.

The scandals plaguing the electoral process led Ms Arroyo to appoint former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. as presidential adviser on electoral reform in early 2006.

Davide reportedly recommended the resignation of Abalos and other commissioners tagged in the scandals. Davide was later appointed ambassador to the United Nations.

A new poll modernization law, the Automated Election Systems Act, was passed in December last year but the Comelec said it could not implement the automation for lack of time.

Suspicious signatures

In March 2006, Abalos again drew flak when the Comelec gave local election registrars the go-signal to verify the signatures for a people's initiative to amend the Charter that was filed by the Sigaw ng Bayan coalition and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines.

The Comelec was accused of conniving with Malacañang to rush the initiative process. The petition called for a shift to a parliamentary government.

The Supreme Court later junked the Malacañang-backed initiative petition, calling the process a "constitutionally infirm" and saying the 6.3 million signatures supporting it were "deceptively gathered."

Cause-oriented groups and political parties have long sought reform in Comelec, starting with Abalos' resignation.

"Rebuilding a damaged institution starts with installing leadership with very high credibility," said lawyer Jose Ricafrente of the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas in April 2006.

Abalos said he was familiar with the "many faces of cheating" because he himself was a victim of cheating. In 1963, Abalos vied for vice mayor of Mandaluyong but lost by 17 votes; he also lost a mayoral bid in 1980.

He claimed the elections were riddled with fraud.

As politician

Abalos was appointed officer in charge of Mandaluyong in 1986 and was later elected mayor two years later.

From 1988, he ran Mandaluyong for the next 12 years, after which he was appointed chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Abalos obtained his law degree from Manuel L. Quezon University in 1957. He supported his college education by working as factory worker, messenger, janitor and a caddy at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

Decades later, he was elected president of the exclusive club.

Eric Alvia, secretary general of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel), described the controversies that hounded Abalos as "a menu of scandals."

Ramon Casiple, executive director of the Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (IPER), said the "Hello Garci" controversy was possibly the biggest scandal of them.

"He was mentioned in the tapes but he was able to dodge it," Casiple said.

If the truth about the tapes were unravelled, Casiple claimed, Abalos would most likely be in the thick of the controversy as much as Garcillano was.

Before all these scandals, Casiple claimed, Abalos had been linked to "smaller" controversies, such as the expenditures he supposedly allowed when he assumed his Comelec post in 2002.

Among these scandals, Casiple said, were the new cars that Abalos allowed to be issued to the commissioners and the salary increase he authorized for the Comelec employees.

"There was no immediate need for the new cars," Casiple said.

Maguindanao issue

In the May midterm elections, Abalos faced more controversies involving Maguindanao election supervisor Lintang Bedol and the scandal-tainted Maguindanao election returns.

The Comelec under his watch was also heavily criticized for allowing a practically unknown Joselito Pepito Cayetano to run for senator under the Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) ticket.

Then Taguig Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano accused his enemies in Malacañang of unleashing his namesake to derail his candidacy. The congressman was eventually elected senator.

The partylist-for-sale exposé, a scheme allegedly carried out by Malacañang operatives in collusion with Comelec employees, also hit the Comelec

in the run up to the May elections.

But Abalos hardly flinched at the exposés. He only said complaints should be formally filed before the Comelec.

Abalos also defended the nomination of his older brother—a medical doctor by profession—to a party-list group of tricycle drivers.

The older Abalos' partylist group, Byaheng Pinoy, was allegedly among the several organizations that fronted for Malacañang.

Question of manners

The biggest issue that Abalos and the Comelec had to face in the midterm elections was the controversial Maguindanao vote.

Maguindanao supposedly yielded a 12-0 sweep for the administration's Team Unity, a result contested by the opposition.

Bedol came under close scrutiny especially after he told the Comelec that documents that held the official results were stolen from his office.

Opposition senatorial candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, who trailed the administration's Juan Miguel Zubiri in the vote count, pleaded unsuccessfully for the Maguindanao results to be excluded from the national canvassing.

'Hot soup'

Abalos' sense of propriety was questioned after the Comelec chair was allegedly seen with the parents of Zubiri at an upscale Makati City hotel at the height of the vote-count controversy.

Abalos later said he went to the hotel because he wanted to take some "hot soup" but had bumped into Zubiri's mother at the hallway.

Abalos said that good manners prompted him to greet the Zubiri couple.

Namfrel's Alvia said Abalos' resignation still left questions hanging.

"Is it just for his self-preservation or is it to protect whoever he's really covering up for?" Alvia said. *With a report from Beverly T. Natividad*

Gov't tells high court ZTE ...

From page A1

The OSG also sought the dismissal of the petitions of Iloilo Vice Gov. Rolex Suplico to nullify the deal and that of losing NBN proponent Amsterdam Holdings Inc. (AHI) for a temporary restraining order on the deal.

The government lawyer claimed that Suplico and AHI had no legal standing to file the pleading because they failed to show the project's direct injury to them.

Among the respondents in the petitions are the National Economic and Development Authority and the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC).

The ZTE deal has been the subject of a Senate and House investigation.

Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. has been accused of brokering the deal between the DOTC and ZTE and of receiving sexual favors and commissions in return.

Abalos has also been accused of offering a bribe to Romulo Neri, former Neda secretary general, so he would endorse the ZTE proposal.

Hearts and minds

"In the battle for the hearts and minds of the public, protagonists often embellish their arguments with salacious and fabricated tales, such that their positions are easily forgotten but falsehoods are not," the OSG said.

"A case in point is the much maligned National Broadband Network project of the government. Lurid stories spun around the undertaking have not helped unravel the truth but rather beclouded it," the OSG said in its 111-page comment filed early Friday evening.

ZTE's loan-funded proposal is "most advantageous" to the country, compared with the proposals of AHI and US firm Arescom, and would save the government about P2 billion annually, according to the OSG.

The NBN project seeks to put up a high-capacity telecommunications network to link government national agencies and local government units nationwide.

Misleading

The OSG also described as "misleading" the contention that the NBN project would put the government into debt when it could choose a project to be undertaken by AHI at no cost to the government.

"For clarification, there was never such free offer in the first place—not from petitioner AHI, not from anybody else. The government would end up paying, and in the long run, would end up paying more even in the highly touted AHI proposal, which uses catchy monikers like 'at no government expense,'" it said.

The OSG pointed out that the government was spending about P4 billion yearly for the services of private telecommunication carriers, but was expected to spend about P2 billion yearly for the network to be provided by ZTE.

Cheapest

The OSG also said that ZTE's proposal was the cheapest when its overall project cost was compared with what the others had promised to deliver. The ZTE proposal would also provide more equipment and better technology.

Under ZTE's proposal, the Philippines would get 300 backbone stations, 300 base stations and nearly 26,000 customer equipment like terminals, telephones and modems, among others, the OSG said.

The $240 million and $135 million proposals of AHI and Arescom, respectively, promise less than 100 base stations and equipment, it noted.

"The foregoing demonstrate not only the cost effectiveness of ZTE's proposal but also the technical superiority thereof when pitted against the two others," it said.

ZTE's offer was also in line with the government's objectives of constructing and operating its own national online network for the information and communication technology requirements of its agencies, according to the OSG.

Cellular network for public

It said AHI's proposal intends to create a privately owned broadband and cellular network to provide cellular phone services to the general public, but with the government as the main subscriber.

Arescom wanted to put up a satellite-based network to connect the Department of Interior and Local Government and selected local government units, according to the OSG.

In terms of track record, the Chinese firm is also a recognized player and is the largest telecom company listed on the Shenzhen and Hong Kong stock exchanges, the OSG pointed out.

In comparison, AHI is a holding company with no experience in telecommunications and no technology partners. Arescom also has no track record in telecom integration.

The OSG also criticized AHI, saying it did not specify how it would finance its proposal.

"Worse, it has for its paid up capital a paltry ... P312,8000 as reflected in its General Information Sheet filed in 2005, the very same amount reflected in its Treasurer's Affidavit filed in 2002 with the Securities and Exchange Commission. With these in mind, how then could petitioner AHI's offer have merited favorable consideration?" the OSG said.

No specified interest

Arescom's proposal would be covered by a US Eximbank loan payable over 10 years at no specified interest rate, it noted. ZTE's proposal, covered by the $329-million soft loan from China, would be payable in 20 years with a five-year grace period.

The OSG also said ZTE was chosen for the NBN project because the Chinese government nominated the company in consideration of the loan it would extend to the Philippines.

The OSG said that China would fund the NBN project via a "tied loan" and that the framers of the Government Procurement Reform Act recognized the validity of loans extended on condition that the beneficiary would get supplies and services from the loan provider.

As for the President Macapagal-Arroyo's statement that the broadband project would push through only at no cost to the government, the OSG said subsequent Cabinet meetings determined that a private undertaking was not feasible.

A chance to reform Comelec

From page A1

an open process."

Lim said the vacancies gave Malacañang a chance to appoint new officials that were "competent, with probity and credibility."

He said Abalos' resignation was also beneficial in that it spared Congress from a tortuous impeachment process.

Henrietta de Villa, chair of the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV), the Comelec's citizens' arm, said she was relieved Abalos had resigned.

Hope for clean elections

"I felt bad for him when I saw him on TV and I'm sure it's a sad day for him and his family. But I feel relief for the country and particularly for the Comelec," De Villa said.

She said that the "problems of Abalos have hampered the Comelec from doing its job."

"With his resignation, we can now proceed to conduct clean and credible elections," De Villa said.

She said "now is a good time" for President Macapagal-Arroyo to appoint "women and men of untarnished integrity and proven records of competence" to the Comelec.

Need for reforms

Two election commissioners, Resurreccion Borra and Florentino Tuason Jr., are set to retire in February next year. Abalos himself was supposed to retire in February, ending his six-year term.

Election lawyer Leila de Lima sounded a cautious note, saying that any reforms in the Comelec following Abalos' resignation "will depend on the next chairman."

Election Commissioner Rene Sarmiento hoped that with Abalos' resignation, the Comelec would no longer be linked to the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) project involving China's telecoms giant ZTE Corp.

"We can now focus our attention on pressing matters, such as election reforms," Sarmiento said.

The Comelec's immediate concern is this month's baranggay and Sangguniang Kabataan polls.

OIC picked today

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said the commission en banc would meet today to elect an officer in charge, who is expected to be Borra, the most senior commissioner.

Sarmiento said Ms Arroyo should not appoint a new Comelec chair until after Abalos' term expires in February.

If a replacement is immediately named, that person would only serve Abalos' unexpired term and yet receive all the retirement benefits, Sarmiento said.

"*Kawawa naman ang taong bayan* (Pity the people)," he said.

Butt of jokes

Sarmiento said he and the other Comelec officers had not been spared from the effects of the ZTE controversy.

"The election officers [from Ilocandia] told me they were being asked about it and we became the butt of jokes because of the issue," he said.

"It's good that he resigned. (The ZTE controversy) is not only damaging (Abalos) himself but the institution. The Comelec has been losing credibility from way, way back," said Eric Alvia, secretary general of the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

Genuine Opposition's Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, who lost to administration candidate Juan Miguel Zubiri in their battle for the 12th senatorial slot in May's fraud-marred elections, told the INQUIRER that Abalos' resignation "is long overdue."

"I don't think, from the first instance that he was appointed, that he was qualified for the job because of his lack of objectivity," Pimentel said.

ZTE controversy

To Pimentel, "it all boils down to integrity."

He said that Abalos' bias against him "is a long story" that began with his lawyering for his father, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., in the graft case over the Mega Pacific computer deal he filed against the Comelec chair.

The Makati Business Club that Lim represents had been calling for Abalos to resign as well as for the government to rescind its contract with the ZTE Corp. following allegations of bribery and irregularities in the deal.

"Malacañang merely suspended the ZTE contract despite all the controversies and scandals when it should have been scrapped," Lim said. "We hope that the truth finally comes out."

Now up to the courts

In a separate interview, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry chair Donald G. Dee said Abalos' resignation exposed the latter to prosecution in the courts.

"This is good in the sense that this allows for the legal processes to be followed as was the experience with (former President Joseph Estrada's) plunder case," Dee said.

"Whatever must be done should be done according to due process." *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

Traders say NBN probe is No. 1 'teleserye'

From page A1

Corp.'s controversial broadband deal with the government is turning out to be one of the country's most watched "*teleserye*," some stock analysts said.

"We just see different clowns and the Senate is the biggest circus in town right now. The market has discounted this already," said a local broker, who refused to be named.

"We think there is no serious threat right now to political stability," the broker said. "What's more important is how the economy is doing and that the opportunity remains to buy stocks in the market brought about by very low interest rates."

Other stock analysts said the foreign exchange and stock markets were numb to the ongoing Senate investigation. If the Palace or the President is not held liable for the multimillion dollar deal, the probe just remains a big source of entertainment, they said.

"I think the ZTE problem is isolated as long as it doesn't threaten the position of [Ms Arroyo]. People are just finding the whole thing entertaining," another official of a local brokerage firm said.

Market focus

Ron Rodrigo, head of research at Unicapital Securities, said Filipinos were not taking the ZTE controversy seriously.

"The markets are focused on the US economy and whether our own economic health will be sustainable. Politics has been downplayed," he said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange main index yesterday finished higher by 25.02 points, or 0.7 percent, to 3,597.92, led by second-tiered stocks and bets that the Bangko Sentral may cut interest rates at Thursday's Monetary Board meeting by 25 basis points, analysts said.

Positive signal

Astro del Castillo, managing director for the investment firm First Grade Holdings Inc., said the resignation of Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos yesterday could be taken as a positive signal by the stock market.

"We applaud his move because it dissipates the political noise dogging the administration. It's time for [Ms Arroyo] to appoint a more credible person to the post who is committed to electoral reforms," Del Castillo said.

Abalos' resignation came amid allegations that he bribed the son of Speaker Jose de Venecia to back out of the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) contract in favor of ZTE.

Del Castillo however, warned that the business environment might be affected if there was no proper prosecution of parties related to bribery allegations.

Business reaction

"Business is unaffected. The process is ongoing to investigate the deal. It's not a shock wave to business. But if it is prolonged and it is shown that there is no level playing field after graft and corruption cases are not prosecuted, then the business sector will react negatively," he added.

Del Castillo said he thought that the text jokes that proliferated about the controversy were part of a public relations ploy to soften the images of public figures distorted by the case.

"It's a public relations strategy rather than the real attitude of the Filipino people. I think Filipinos are hungry for justice and they'd like to see a level playing field," he said.

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Man stopped from stabbing Panlilio

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A MAN, WHO POLICE DESCRIBED as insane, on Monday tried to stab Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio with a fan knife while the official was being interviewed by reporters at the lobby of the provincial capitol here.

Panlilio, 53, a Catholic priest, was unhurt as one of his police security aides prevented the attack.

Leslie Manalo, reporter of Infomax Channel 8, said the man first approached her a few minutes before the interview at about 8:30 a.m.

"How do I seek help. I am from Macabebe. I'm seeking help for another person," Manalo, 21, quoted the man as saying.

She said she advised him to go to the Kabalen Desk, which accepts requests for medical assistance.

A foot away

When reporters and cameramen started to gather around Panlilio, Manalo said she noticed the man positioning behind the governor.

"He was only one to two feet away from Among (Father) Ed," she said.

"Then he opened his pouch. I saw a pack of cigarette in it. Then he swung open a fan knife and pointed it in the direction of Among Ed. By the time I was trying to alert Kong Jun (SPO3 Juan Dimatulac, the governor's security aide), who already grabbed the man's hand and whisked him away," Manalo said.

'666'

This caused a few minutes of commotion at the lobby where some 70 people gathered following Panlilio's launch of his "White Campaign," a crusade for good governance and good citizenship.

Security men pulled the governor away briefly from reporters.

Jeffrey Gomez, reporter of ABS-CBN Pampanga, confirmed the incident. The footage captured the incident as well.

"During the interview, I was wondering why Leslie was so restless and frightened. When I looked behind Among Ed, I saw the man holding his knife in the direction of the governor," Gomez said.

He said the man, estimated to be between 35 and 40 years old, wore a red sleeveless shirt and sported a tattoo of "666" on his upper right arm.

Dimatulac said he turned over the man to the police's Special Action Forces personnel assigned to the governor. A team of eight SAF men has been securing the governor since June 20 on orders of Director General Oscar Calderon, former chief of the Philippine National Police.

The police in the City of San Fernando released the man after 10 minutes of questioning, according to Supt. Audie Atienza, city police director.

'He looked depressed'

"He's known to be crazy," Atienza said to explain why his men freed the suspect.

Atienza, however, ordered them to again look for the man for further questioning. The suspect is said to be a resident of Barangay Sta. Lucia, a village just behind the capitol compound.

Panlilio said he did not really see what happened.

Describing the man whom he later saw from a distance, he said: "He also looked depressed."

"I ordered a check on his background. I feel he violated the law on illegal possession of deadly weapon and election ban [on the carrying of deadly weapons]," Panlilio told the INQUIRER.

Among the people

In public events, Panlilio is known to freely mingle with the people. Many still treat him as priest, kissing his hand as a sign of respect. Others simply shake his hands or greet him.

His security aides usually watch over him from a distance.

"He has instructed (his guards) not to prevent people who come near him," Dimatulac said, adding this was the first threat on Panlilio's life.

It's towns' duty to keep forests green, says DENR

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—ENvironment officials have asked officials of the province's 13 towns to muster enough political will and assume the task of protecting their communal forests as required by law.

Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Benguet Environment and Natural Resources Office (Benro) said the local officials' obligation to lead the inventory of existing communal forests was long overdue.

Tribes' role

They said the call for the towns' participation recognized the role of the province's indigenous communities in determining the extent of use of their natural resources.

The environment officials said the devolution provision of the Local Government Code (Republic Act 7160) provided the legal basis for the DENR's decision to transfer some of its functions to cities, towns and provinces.

Explaining the devolved functions to local officials at the provincial capitol here recently, Severino Balangcod, Benro forester, said the code transferred to towns the management and control of communal forests with an area of not more than 50 square kilometers or 5,000 hectares.

Balangcod said the management of small watershed areas, which are sources of local water supply, was also devolved.

Towns' duties

He said towns could impose measures to prevent illegal tree cutting and the *kaingin* system or "slash and burn" agriculture.

He reminded local officials that they should implement the DENR's Rescue for Important Conservation Hotspots (Rich) program that required them to save caves and endangered waterfalls.

Gov. Nestor Fongwan welcomed the devolved functions and advised local officials to be ready to file cases against private claimants and settlers within communal forests.

"They will be expected to [resist] if asked to vacate portions of the forest they have occupied for years," he said.

DENR officials said many tax declarations encroached on portions of the province's forests, as either vegetable farms or residential lots.

No record of forests

Manuel Pogeyed, provincial environment natural resources officer, said the DENR has no record of existing communal forests.

But he said commercial vegetable farms, forest fires, erosion and illegal logging have harmed the province's communal forests, national parks and watersheds.

Pogeyed cited Sablan and this town's successful bid to protect their forests by placing monuments indicating their boundaries after a survey. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

REM ZAMORA

PLANTING LIFE
A child Aeta from the village of Tarukan plants a tree in Pinatubo as part of the "Trees for Life" project. Trees for Life is a joint project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Green Army to plant 20 million trees across the country between July and November this year.

Board OKs ₱9 pay hike for Cebu workers

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—THE REGIONAL wage board agreed on Saturday night to implement a minimum wage increase of P9 for Metro Cebu and P5 for other parts of Central Visayas.

Elias Cayanong, regional director of the Department of Labor and Employment and board chair, said the new wage order did not provide any exemption to its implementation, although the private sector representative had proposed that the increases take effect in January next year.

"That's the best win-win solution we can give to the labor sector and the management sector to maintain tranquility and harmony. We hope all sectors could understand the board's decision," Cayanong said.

Exequiel Sarcauga, labor assistant regional director, said the national office did not favor the proposal for a January implementation when the board asked if that was legal.

The wage order will take effect 15 days after publication, he said.

Cayanong said the wages in the academe would be adjusted next school year.

Contractual workers will also benefit from the pay increases, he said.

Passengers, crew of vessel rescued from stormy seas

ILOILO CITY—THE COAST Guard rescued the passengers and crewmen of a vessel that ran aground Sunday off the coast of an Iloilo town.

Commander Harold Jarder, Coast Guard chief in Iloilo, said fast craft Weesam Express I got stuck in muddy shores around 7 a.m. on Sunday, shortly after it left the Bacolod Port.

Strong winds and big waves forced the vessel to run aground Sunday off the coast of Dumangas, Iloilo and along the Guimaras Strait.

The Coast Guard would have transferred the 67 passengers and 17 crewmen to the BRP Edsa 2 but could not do so due to big waves. Two tugboats towed the vessel to the Dumangas Port where it arrived 5 a.m. Sunday.

Several schools in Iloilo City suspended classes in all levels yesterday amid heavy rains and strong winds triggered by tropical depression "Hanna."

Floods swept major parts of the city since two weeks. The city council declared a state of calamity last Wednesday after 51 of the city's 180 barangays and more than 2,000 families were displaced by the flood.

In Negros Occidental, floods and strong winds destroyed 43 houses and damaged 163 in five towns and one city, provincial social welfare officer Liane Garcia said.

Silay Mayor Jose Montelibano and Talisay Mayor Eric Saratan said their cities were also hit on Sunday by blackouts. *Nestor Burgos Jr. and Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas*

Veggie towns urged to draw up waste plans

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—LOcal environment officials have urged the province's vegetable producing towns to draw up solid waste management plans to deal with increased garbage generation, including the 30 to 50 tons of vegetable trimmings thrown daily here.

The provincial board enacted an environment code but this was not enough to push majority of the towns to come up with their waste disposal programs, according to the Benguet Environment and Natural Resources Office (Benro).

Poor compliance

The Benro on Wednesday said only six of the 13 towns have solid waste management plans—Atok, Bakun, Buguias, La Trinidad, Sablan and Itogon.

The rest—Kibungan, Kapangan, Tuba, Mankayan, Tublay, Bokod and Kabayan—were still planning their waste disposal programs.

Julius Kollin, Benro head, said the plans were still far from complying with the establishment of controlled dumps and sanitary landfills as required by the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act (Republic Act 9003).

The law orders the closure of all open dumps within five years from its passage in 2000.

Kollin said the towns, save for La Trinidad, had complained of lack of funds to build sanitary landfills.

'Ubbak'

But the province's biggest headache is how to dispose of a daily average of 30 tons of vegetable trimmings, locally known as "ubbak," that come from the vegetable trading post here.

The trimmings come from 1.5 million kilograms of vegetables traded here daily and which farmers are advised to haul back in their trucks going home.

But Atok, Tublay and Buguias officials have complained that farmers often dump their trimmings along roadsides, leaving them as eyesores and potential health risks when they began to decay.

No room

The three towns, major producers of potatoes, cabbages and carrots, are located along Halsema Highway, the Cordillera's major vegetable trade route to the trading post here and in Baguio City.

This town has a controlled dump and a compost facility in Barangay Alno but it could only accommodate three tons of trimmings.

Gov. Nestor Fongwan urged the mayors of the vegetable producing towns along Halsema Highway to look for areas that could serve as sites for compost facilities so the farmers would be encouraged to throw their wastes there.

"But the sites must not threaten any communal forest, river system or watershed," he said. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

TO KEEP prices low, vegetable shipping relies on the cost-effective industry of porters once farmers begin transferring their produce from the farms to the trading posts of Benguet. EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

WAVE LENGTH BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU
Children enjoy playing in the water amid the ruins of houses that were destroyed by strong waves whipped up by monsoon weather in Barangay Bucana in Davao City.

Port strike brings ₱20M in lost income

By Romy Amarado and Alex V. Pal
Inquirer Visayas

DUMAGUETE CITY—A PORT WORKERS' strike entered its fourth week yesterday, resulting in income losses of nearly P20 million to the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) and shipping lines.

Over 100 workers belonging to the Associated Labor Union-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) started the strike on Sept. 9 after the winning bidder for cargo handling services refused to take all of them.

The bidder, Prudential Customs Brokerage Services Inc. (PCBSI), refused to absorb all members, saying it was not bound by the collective bargaining agreement between them and their former employer, Cipres Stevedoring and Arrastre Inc. The CBA expired in 2004.

Joel Obar, PCBSI legal counsel, said the employment of the porters was a management prerogative.

Raul Santos, Visayas PPA port manager, vowed to restore port operations this week during a forum attended by businessmen from the Negros Oriental Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Friday. "What we hate most is to be hostage by a group of non-complying personnel," he said.

The PPA had earlier received a copy of a decision of the regional trial court denying a petition for a temporary restraining order filed by the strikers.

Since September 2002, the PPA had taken over cargo handling services after the workers struck against the Cipres Stevedoring and Arrastre Inc. When the strikers demanded privatization, a bidding was held in December 2006, but the arrastre group backing them had lost the bidding.

Settlers demand relocation site, funds for trade

TRECE MARTIRES CITY—HUNDREDS OF members of an urban poor group trooped to the Cavite provincial capitol here on Monday to ask for a moratorium on the ongoing demolition of squatter areas in the province.

Members of the Samahan ng Nagkakaisang Mamamayan sa Kabite (Sanagka) and Samahang Maralita-Zoto (SM-Zoto) started their 4-km march from Manggahan Crossing in nearby General Trias town and arrived here at around 10 a.m.

The protesters assailed the provincial government for its alleged failure to ensure the relocation of the families who would be displaced by the demolition.

"We are just concerned that those who would be displaced by this massive demolition will have nowhere to go as the capitol has not provided them with relocation," said Tonet Fajanilan, Sanagka president.

Cavite Gov. Erineo "Ayong" Maliksi promptly met with the leaders of the protesters and assured them of two relocation sites in Dasmariñas and General Trias towns.

The governor said the relocation areas were provided by the local government of Dasmariñas and General Trias.

Maliksi, however, explained that under the Urban Development and Housing Act, the provincial government is required to provide relocation only to residents of structures built before 1992.

He also reiterated that they were only after the safety of the squatters most of whom, he said, reside in danger zones like waterways, railroad tracks and under bridges.

He said officials had also consulted residents and officials of villages before they started knocking down shanties in the province.

Wilfredo Viñegas, chair of the Provincial Housing and Urban Development Office, said the rally was just a result of "miscommunication" between his office and the protesters.

"There was actually a meeting scheduled for today. We didn't know why they mounted their rally when we were ready to talk with them," he told the INQUIRER.

Fajanilan admitted that they had arranged a meeting with Maliksi. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Execs seek PUV access to Kennon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE PROVINCE's peace and order council shot down a proposal to declare the regional chief of the Department of Transportation and Communications *persona non grata* to avoid a dispute over Kennon Road from turning into an ugly word war.

But Gov. Nestor Fongwan, the council chair, might not just avert a clash with the top DOTC official, Federico Mandapat Jr., who appeared firm in enforcing a circular he issued on Aug. 24 that barred public utility vehicles (PUVs) from passing through Kennon.

Fongwan said he would ask Mandapat to withdraw the circular, saying the official was not authorized to declare the 41.2-kilometer road unstable. Told about the move, Mandapat said: "I will stick to my circular."

Mandapat issued Memorandum Circular No. 2007-001, which directed PUVs to take the Palispis-Aspiras Road (formerly Marcos Highway) instead.

Fongwan questioned the directive after the Department of Public Works and Highways stated that the DOTC was not the proper authority to issue the traffic advisory on Kennon's safety. The DPWH has asked Mandapat to recall the circular.

But Mandapat is unfazed. The circular, he said, would all the more remain, especially now that the DOTC already assumed the functions of an inter-agency road safety committee. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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GMA called a hypocrite over UN rights speech

By TJ Burgonio

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO HAS drawn a sharp rebuke from the mother of missing activist Jonas Burgos and from a human rights group over a speech she delivered at the United Nations in New York.

The President, in her address to the 62nd UN General Assembly last Friday, said the Philippines remained the most democratic nation in Asia and did not tolerate human rights violations.

"We were aghast that Ms Arroyo, in her speech before the UN General Assembly, would [say] without batting an eyelash that her government is respecting human rights," said Karapatan secretary general Marie Hilao-Enriquez yesterday.

"She's a hypocrite," Enriquez said at a briefing, adding that the families of the 886 activists killed during the President six-year administration "had not been given justice."

For her part, Edita Burgos, whose 38-year-old son Jonas was allegedly abducted by military agents on April 28, questioned the President's sincerity in resolving the human rights violations in the country.

"I question the sincerity of the top official of the government. If she were really sincere and ordered her troops [to investigate the case], I would know what happened to my son. It's been five months," Burgos said.

Enriquez and Burgos were in Geneva last week to attend sessions of the UN Human Rights Council and to present a report on the human rights situation in the Philippines to file a complaint on the young Burgos' case.

The UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearance (WGEID) is set to review the Jonas' case during its third session in late November.

Burgos, widow of the late press freedom icon Jose Burgos Jr., said the government could show its seriousness by allowing the WGEID to come to Manila and investigate the disappearances.

She said the group had notified the Philippine government of its intent "to be invited" to Manila to conduct a fact-finding mission as early as May 2006 but had not gotten a reply.

"If the government is sincere, then she (Ms Arroyo) should respond to the notification," Burgos said at the briefing.

Unless the government responds to the notification, the WGEID cannot act on her complaint and come to Manila to investigate her son's disappearance, among other cases.

Burgos also said the Supreme Court's issuance of the rules of the writ of amparo "brings hope" to the families of victims of disappearances. However, she could not say whether she would apply for such a writ in her son's case.

Stop killings, disappearances, GMA orders new PNP chief

By Alcuin Papa and Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO TOLD newly installed Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon to put a stop to the spate of political killings that has tainted her administration.

"Let human rights be the legacy of Sonny Razon," Ms Arroyo said, using the new police chief's nickname, in her speech at the turnover of the PNP leadership yesterday from the retiring Oscar Calderon to Razon.

Razon, previously deputy director for administration and a member of Philippine Military Academy Class '74, will reach the retirement age of 56 in September next year, which gives him less than a year to accomplish his mission.

Razon had earlier been appointed head of Task Force Usig, the PNP group assigned to investigate the killings of leftist activists and journalists. No big cases have been cracked, however, and no arrests have been announced.

Update on arrests, convictions

"The first report I want to receive from (Razon) is an update on arrests, convictions and the imprisonment of those responsible for the killings of political activists and journalists," the President said, adding that both communist rebels and rogue elements in the security forces were to blame.

"Our nation has an unfortunate history of political violence by those on the Left and the Right and we hope to break that cycle once and for all," she said.

A United Nations human rights rapporteur recently scored the government for not doing enough to stop the killing and disappearance of political dissidents, estimated at over 800 in the past five years. Most of the killings have been linked to soldiers.

Ms Arroyo said she would back Razon with funds and equipment to improve investigations, including those against military forces.

"If there are rogue elements, they must be brought to justice," she added.

To stop the killings, the President said she would follow the recommendations of the Melo Commission the body tasked to look into the killings—to establish separate courts, expedite prosecutions, expand victim assistance and increase funding for more investigators."

No one should have to die

"No one should have to die for speaking out for their political beliefs," she said.

The President, however, said terrorists like the Abu Sayyaf group and armed communists "must be checked."

In his acceptance speech, however, Razon was apparently unprepared for the sharp focus on extrajudicial or political killings in the country. He stressed his mission to restore community safety and return the trusted "mamang pulis" (mister policeman) to the streets.

He announced his "Ireport Mo Kay Tsip" program and called on the public to text him, or at least the police leadership, their complaints about rogue cops through SMS number 2920.

But in an interview with reporters after the turnover rites, Razon said he would do his best to stop the political killings.

"*Kaya po yan at kakayanin* (We can do it, and we will do it)."

Respect for human rights

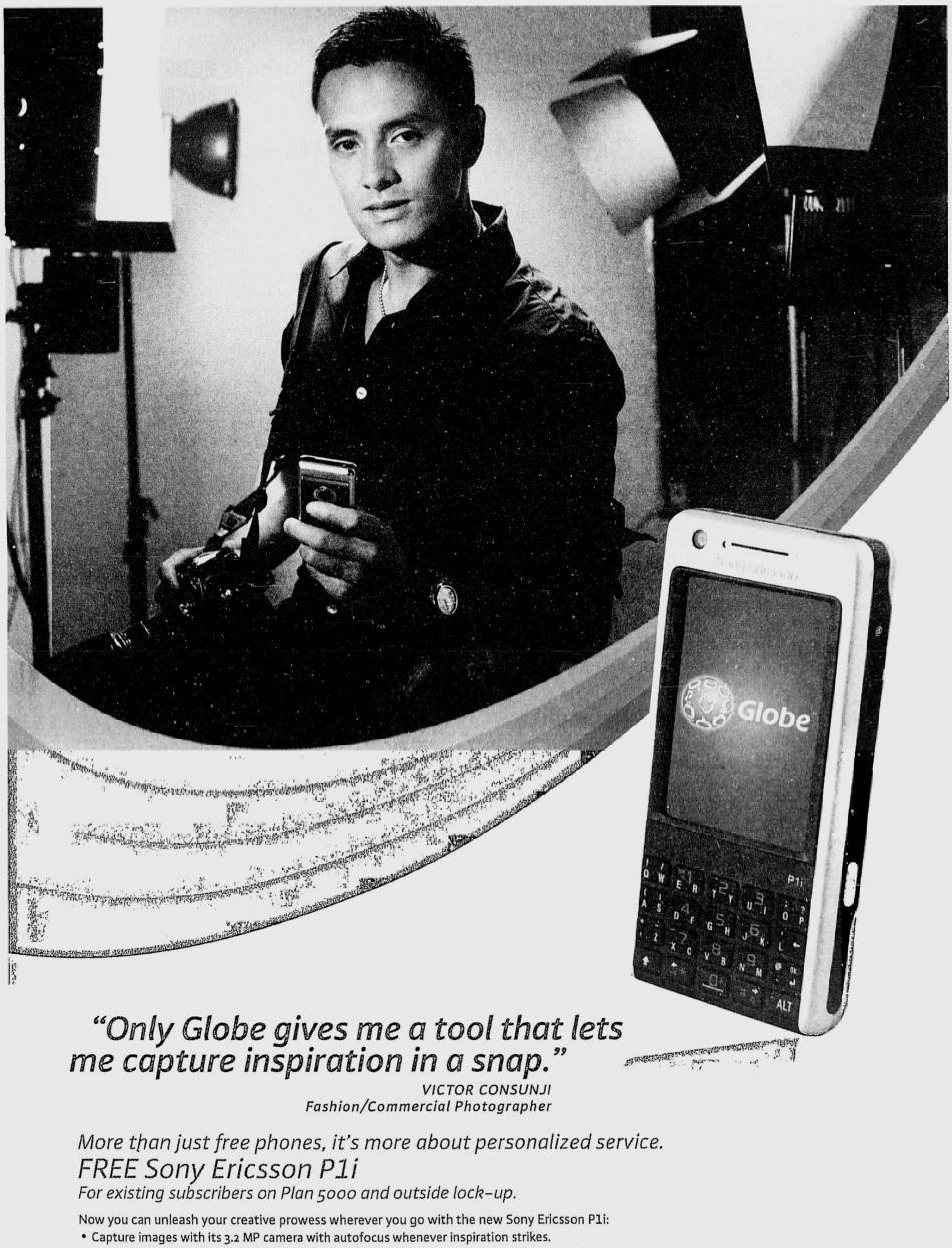
"We will do everything we can to adhere to the strict observance of human rights and international humanitarian law," Razon said. He promised to launch a new program emphasizing respect for human rights among policemen.

"This is also part of 'mamang pulis'—to not only take care of our communities but also to take care of the rights of our citizens.

For now, he said the PNP will hold seminars and symposia on human rights for policemen.

Razon said he would discuss the orders of the President in a command conference.

He was confident, he said, the PNP under his stewardship would shed its image of a human rights violator.



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DID YOU KNOW

EXACTLY seven years ago, Sarao Motors Inc. in Pasay City—the country's pioneer jeepney maker—stopped production because of rising costs and low sales, laying off 250 workers. The company, established in 1956, decreased production from 18 vehicles a day in the mid-1980s, to just three a day during a three-day workweek. The jeepney, known as the "King of the Road," was a creation from surplus US Army jeeps left behind after World War II. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

Muntinlupa City university tutors fired

'Other casual employees laid off with no warning and for no clear reason'

By Julie M. Aurelio

AROUND 50 OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES OF the city government-run Pamantasang Lungsod ng Muntinlupa (PLMun) have been laid off from work since June for no clear reason.

Among those fired by the Board of Regents (BOR) were PLMun president Dr. Miguel Udtohan, vice president Brenda Jacaho, criminology dean Enrico Vibar, education dean Carmen Solayao, guidance department head Dr. Corazon Palomique, registrar Remedios Cunanan and National Service Training Program chief Jones Espeleta.

"It's not clear why they were terminated," a PLMun staffer who spoke on condition of anonymity told the INQUIRER.

The source said Solayao, Palomique, Espeleta and Vibar were relieved by the board only last week.

All of the university's employees, including its officials, are casuals.

"Some of those fired were only informed verbally and no letter was given to them. Others reported for work only to find

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13 passengers hurt in 3-vehicle collision in QC

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THIRTEEN PERSONS WERE injured, three of them seriously, in an accident involving two passenger buses and an 18-wheel truck before dawn yesterday in Quezon City.

A Quezon City Police District Traffic Sector 5 report identified 10 of the wounded as Francisco Romero, 36; Gilbert Berlon, 20; Edgardo Berlon, 40; Emmanuel de la Paz, 42; Dominador Dimdam, 51; Caijo Bonquin, 35; Marilou Pascua, 35; Eleazar Mangubat, 57; Richelda Ligson, 44 and Joseph Morilla, 31.

Passengers

They were passengers of the Nova Transport (TWR 949) or FT Liner (NYH 619) buses.

Also injured were Francisco Ignacio, the driver of the Isuzu truck (XAS 910), his assistant Daniel Berot and another identified only as Roberto. All three were taken to the East Avenue Medical Center.

The police said Ligson, Morilla and Roberto sustained serious injuries, while the rest were treated for slight bruises and cuts.

The incident happened at around 3:30 a.m. yesterday.

Impact

The 18-wheel truck was making a U-turn on the northbound lane of Commonwealth Avenue near Philcoa when the Nova Transport bus slammed into it, followed by the other bus.

Because of the impact, Berot was thrown against the windshield of the truck while the other injured persons fell off their seats.

The driver of the Nova Transport bus, who was not identified, escaped.

Heavy traffic

The accident caused heavy traffic on Commonwealth Avenue up to the Tandang Sora area until the vehicles were removed before noon.

Doctor in Mendez slay shows up at NBI

By Tina G. Santos

THE DOCTOR WHO brought suspected hazing victim Cris Anthony Mendez to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center finally surfaced at the National Bureau of Investigation yesterday afternoon.

Dr. Francisco Cruz, an ophthalmologist at the VMMC in Quezon City, in previous weeks, refused to heed a summons of the NBI to shed light on the case.

Accompanied by his new lawyer, Norberto Malit, Cruz arrived at the NBI Anti-Terrorism Division office shortly before 2 p.m. He, however, declined to be interviewed by the media.

Romulo Asis, chief of the NBI-ATD, declined to reveal the content of Cruz's statement but claimed that it was "very vital" to the investigation.

Malit said his client had every intention to come out and cooperate in the investigation but "was given a different advice by his previous lawyer."

"His (Cruz) first lawyer had a different approach," Malit told reporters.

"I advised him to come out in the open, otherwise he would be blamed. *Mababaon siya dito.*"

Cruz's first lawyer, Rafael Armovit, was reportedly provided by the Sigma Rho, the fraternity alluded to as the group Mendez, a public administration major, tried to join.

Cruz did not show up at the NBI earlier because he was concerned for his son, Mico, who reportedly accompanied him in taking Mendez to the government hospital, Malit said.

"Si Dr. Cruz *siyempre iniisip yung anak niya, nataranta na din,*" the lawyer said as he confirmed that it was Mico who brought Mendez to the their house in Congressional Village, Project 8, Quezon City.

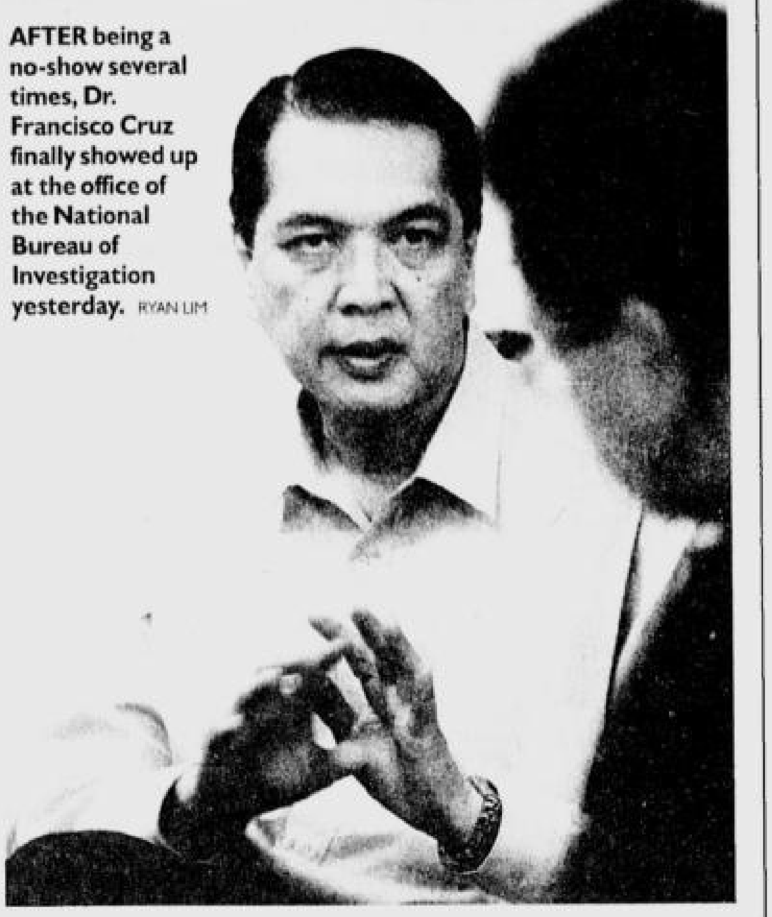
Mico was a law student at the UP and reportedly a neophyte of the Sigma Rho fraternity, Malit said.

"Mico is young and gullible. Maybe he was the one asked by the group to bring Mendez to the hospital since his father is a a doctor, ," Malit explained.

"Being a doctor, the older Cruz acted on his instinct to check on Mendez and bring him to the hospital," he added. "What else do you do when you see somebody in that condition?"

He said it was only in the hospital that Cruz probably realized the gravity of the situation.

"*Ngayon silang mag-ama ang naiipit,*" Malit said, adding that he would also convince Mico to surface and cooperate in the investigation. Without saying that hazing actually occurred, Malit said Mendez's injuries were "obviously hazing marks."



AFTER being a no-show several times, Dr. Francisco Cruz finally showed up at the office of the National Bureau of Investigation yesterday. RYAN LIM

On Aug. 27, Mendez was brought to the hospital by Cruz and several others. He was declared dead on arrival; the findings of an autopsy report showed that he was beaten up badly because of numerous bruises all over his body.

Apart from bringing the 20-year-old graduating college student to the VMMC, Asis had said it was also Cruz who approved the release of Mendez's body to the St. Peter funeral parlor.

Underpass to Quezon Memorial Circle now open

By Kenneth M. del Rosario

PEDESTRIANS WHO WANT TO go to the Quezon Memorial Circle from the Quezon City Hall—and vice versa—no longer have to dodge speeding vehicles on the busy Elliptical Road.

They can now safely cross the road using the just completed pedestrian underpass built by the city government. "This would greatly lessen, if not eliminate, the risk of accidents posed to pedestrians crossing the street because they can now use the underpass," said Germiniano Victa, a city engineer involved in the P49-million project.

"The underpass is also expected to greatly improve the traffic flow on Elliptical Road since there would be less people crossing the street," he added.

Works on the installation of elevators to allow the disabled to use the underground walkway is yet to be completed.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte yesterday inaugurated the underpass which he said was in line with his government's infrastructure development program.

The opening of the walkway is also part of the city's celebration of its 68th foundation day on Oct. 12, he added.

Alberto Estoestas, a security guard manning the underpass, said vendors would not be allowed in the underpass to allow pedestrians to move freely.

Columnist Jarius Bondoc's dilemma

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS Chair Benjamin Abalos has resigned over allegations that he was a major player in the National Broadband Network project scandal.

The public is awaiting the resignation of other major players in the scandal.

But knowing them, I doubt if the significant others will ever resign.

* * *

Romulo Neri, former director general of the National Economic Development Authority, has indicated he would no longer give the Senate blue ribbon committee crucial testimony that would directly link President Macapagal-Arroyo to the controversy.

Neri, invoking executive privelege, refused to answer queries from senators last week about the alleged involvement of his boss in the scandal in the open.

* * *

The INQUIRER banner headline story Sunday said Neri was ready to talk during closed-door executive session.

But then an administration senator and a Cabinet member allegedly intervened.

The senator was identified in the report as Joker Arroyo, and the Cabinet member as Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya.

The report said that Sen. Arroyo motioned to Andaya to enter the room after he saw that Neri was on the verge of talking.

My source in the Senate confirmed everything in the INQUIRER story.

But he said the story missed out on one detail: Neri, after asking the senators whether or not what he knew could "spark another Edsa revolt," vomited several times.

My source said Neri had to run to the restroom more than two times to throw up.

That means he was too scared to talk, my source said.

* * *

If Neri now refuses to talk, this writer suggests the Blue Ribbon committee turn to Philippine Star columnist Jarius Bondoc who exposed the NBN scandal.

Neri allegedly told Jarius everything he knew about the NBN scandal, including details about Abalos and businessman Ricky Razon, a friend of Mike Arroyo, the President's husband.

Jarius told me he was torn between patriotism and journalism ethics. This was his dilemma: Whether or not to make public everything Neri told him about the NBN deal. Jarius also asked my advice.

I told him that loyalty to his country should take precedence over other considerations.

* * *

Detained Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, former Marine commandant, is very sick, but his jailers refuse to send him to a hospital allegedly on orders of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon.

Miranda, former Army Rangers chief Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, and Marine Col. Ariel Querubin are among the several officers detained for their alleged involvement in an attempted coup two years ago.

If Miranda dies for lack of medical attention, won't Esperon, his mistah of Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class 1974, be bothered by his conscience?

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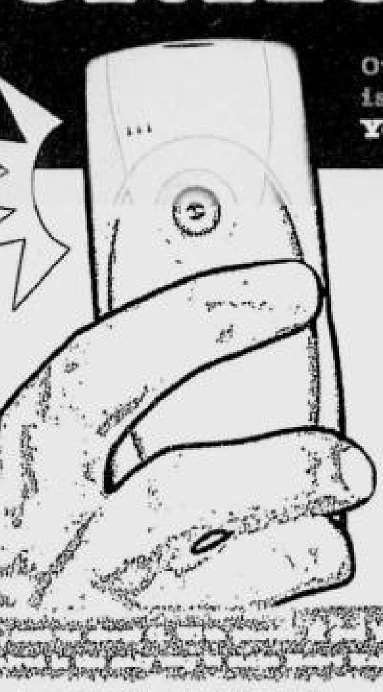


Muntinlupa City university tutors fired

From page A17

out that they had been replaced," the source added.

"The people are so demoralized. They don't know if they will still be on next month's payroll because of the wave of terminations," the source said.

The personnel changes have sparked accusations that Mayor Aldrin San Pedro, who was elected into office only last May, was behind the move which was branded as "politically motivated."

San Pedro, however, denied this.

"They can think that way but the truth is that some of them were ineffective so I had them replaced," he told the INQUIRER over the phone.

According to him, Udtohan and Solayao were fired after the BOR learned that they were also serving as officials of the University of Maasin in Leyte province.

Udtohan was the president of the university while Solayao was the vice president, he added.

"*Niloloko nila ang PLMun. Ngayon na naglalabasan ang problema sa PLMun* (They were fooling the PLMun. It's only now that the problems at the PLMun are starting to surface)," San Pedro said.

According to the mayor, he has given Fe Martinez, the university's new president, "a free hand in assessing the performance of the school's teaching staff."

"I am still pushing to introduce permanent positions at the PLMun so that qualified professors will be protected and have security of tenure. We will implement this once we've replaced the nonperforming staff," he said.

But Roger Madula, the president of the student council, criticized the firing of the school staff, pointing out that it was the students who are affected.

He asked the school administration to wait for the end of the first semester before firing any more teachers or staffers.

The INQUIRER tried to contact PLMun officials for comment but calls to the university's phone lines went unanswered.

Commission on Higher Education lawyer Santiago Regalado, meanwhile, said that the hiring and firing of employees in colleges and universities being run by local governments were "out of the commission's jurisdiction."

Regalado added that the "CHEd's only concerns are the program and courses being offered by those schools." *With Jerry Esplanada*

METROBRIEFS

Cops nab ex-lawman for violating gun ban

A FORMER police officer has been arrested in Caloocan City for violating the nationwide gun ban imposed starting last Saturday by the Commission on Elections for the Oct. 29 barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections. Senior Supt. William Macavinta, city police chief, identified the former police officer as Russel Alfonso, 35, who yielded a 9 mm firearm. Policemen were on patrol over the weekend when they flagged down Alfonso who was on a motorcycle. When searched, they found the firearm in his possession. The police said they would charge Alfonso with violating the Omnibus Election Code and illegal possession of firearms. The gun ban will be in effect until Nov. 13.

Nancy C. Carvajal

Police official's death still under investigation

POLICE are examining several foot and hand prints which were found at the spot where the body of Quezon City police official, Supt. Jose "JoeGar" Garcia, was discovered by his son, Jericho, before midnight Saturday. Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula of the QC Police District said they would try to determine whom the prints belong to since these would confirm reports that Garcia had two visitors on the night he was found dead. The body of Garcia, 51, commander of the QCPD Station 10, was found at the back of his house in Veterans Village, Barangay Pasong Tamo, Quezon City, at around 11:30 p.m. He bore a lone gunshot wound in the chest and was lying on a sofa in a hut in the backyard. Gatdula added that their initial investigation showed that Garcia's death could be work-related but also did not rule out the possibility of suicide.

Kenneth M. del Rosario

Another body found

THE BODY of a man believed to be a victim of summary execution was found inside a garbage bag yesterday morning in Cubao, Quezon City. Police described the victim as between 28 and 30 years old, 5'6" tall and dressed in a sleeveless shirt and a pair of denim shorts. He bore several tattoos all over his body. The victim had eight stab wounds in the chest while his hands were tied together with packaging tape. The incident was the fourth time in two weeks a man's body was found inside a garbage bag.

Jeannette I. Andrade

Ex-barangay watchman shot dead in Quezon City

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A FORMER BARANGAY WATCHMAN was shot dead by a man on board a motorcycle yesterday morning in Quezon City.

Carlos Francisco, a 40-year-old widower, was sipping coffee in front of his house on Corregidor Road in Barangay Holy Spirit when he was shot twice in the face.

The victim, who used to be a member of the barangay's police security and protection office, died on the spot.

A report from the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit showed that the incident happened at 6:15 a.m.

PO3 Joseph Dino said that after shooting the victim, the gunman picked up a woman who was standing nearby and left with her on his motorcycle.

Dino said that Francisco resigned from the barangay force several months ago to work abroad.

"He may have been involved in disputes when he was still a barangay watchman, and this could have been the only opportunity for the suspects to kill him," the case investigator said. The female with him have been the lookout, Dino added.

Bomber in burqa kills 15 in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN—A SUICIDE bomber disguised in a woman's burqa struck at a police checkpost in northwestern Pakistan on Monday, killing at least 15 people including four policemen, officials said.

The blast happened on the outskirts of Bannu, a key garrison town near Pakistan's troubled tribal areas bordering Afghanistan where the Army is battling al-Qaida and Taliban militants.

It was the latest in a string of deadly attacks in Pakistan since government troops stormed the al-Qaida-linked Red Mosque in Islamabad in July, and comes days before President Pervez Musharraf seeks reelection.

"A man disguised in a burqa got out of an autorickshaw when police stopped the vehicle for a search at a checkpoint. He then blew himself up," police officer Asar Islam said.

Fifteen bodies had been brought to the local hospital, four of them women, and medics were treating 31 wounded people, some of whom were critically injured, doctor Mohammad Usman said.

"We have received some severed limbs and we are trying to ascertain if they belonged to the bomber," he said.

Four policemen were also among the dead, police officer Islam added.

Police sources said they had earlier received intelligence that male suicide bombers dressed in all-covering women's burqas, a common garment in conservative northwestern Pakistan, would soon launch attacks.

They had beefed up security at all checkpoints and the vehicle carrying the bomber was intercepted as a result, but the attacker blew himself up before they could check it, one source said.

Chief military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Waheed Arshad confirmed the blast but dismissed earlier witness reports that the bombing targeted a military convoy passing through the town.

"It was a suicide attack. It was not targeted at any military convoy," he said.

Nearly 300 people have died in attacks blamed on Islamic militants, most of them suicide bombings, since the Red Mosque raid. Most of the attacks have targeted Pakistani security forces.

The mosque standoff also coincided with the breakdown of a controversial peace deal between the government and Islamic militants in the tribal belt.

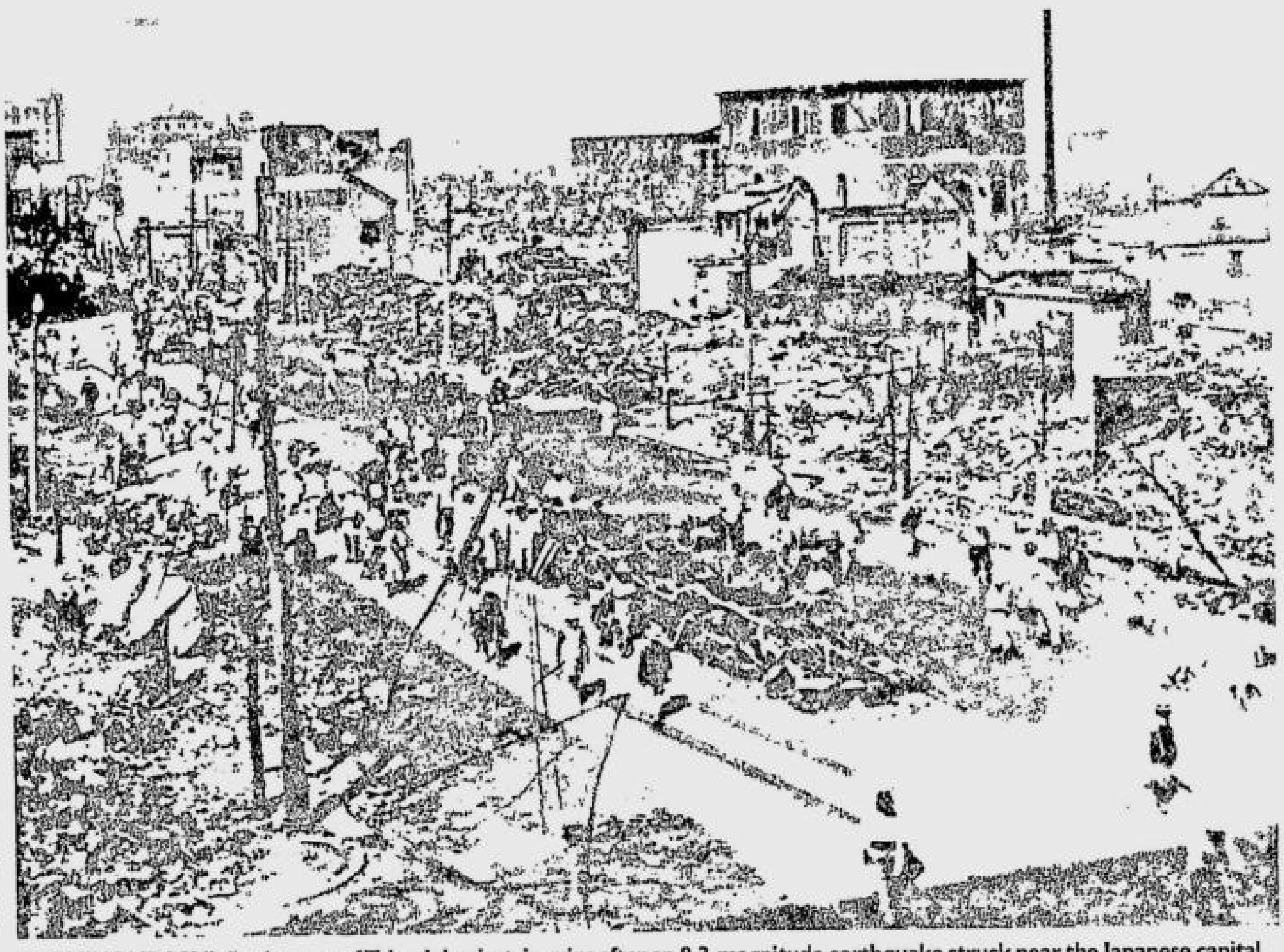
Al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden called on Muslims in Pakistan to wage holy war against the government of key US ally Musharraf and his armed forces in a new audio message issued less than two weeks ago.

In another video, Bin Laden's No. 2, Ayman al-Zawahiri, also warned that Musharraf would be "punished" over the killing of leading rebel cleric Abdul Rashid Ghazi in the storming of the Red Mosque.

Musharraf has been under mounting pressure from Washington to tackle militants, especially in the tribal border zones where US officials have said that al-Qaida is regrouping to launch attacks on western targets.

The president, whose popularity has slumped in recent months, is aiming for reelection for another five-year term in a parliamentary vote on Saturday, a move that has sparked fierce political opposition. *AFP*

Tokyo takes new steps to prepare for 'Big One'



THE NIHONBASHI district, one of Tokyo's busiest, in ruins after an 8.3-magnitude earthquake struck near the Japanese capital on Sept. 1, 1923, killing about 140,000. Scientifically, it's almost a sure thing—Tokyo is awaiting a catastrophic earthquake. AP

TOKYO—SCIENTIFICALLY, IT'S ALmost a sure thing—Tokyo is awaiting a catastrophic earthquake. In fact, it's long overdue.

And when it does hit, officials say, there is one other thing that is a near certainty—hundreds of thousands of people will be in need of shelter that the government will not be able to provide. Studies show as many as 3 million will be homeless, some 600,000 more than shelters can now handle.

But with little space for new facilities, the city is hoping to cut down those numbers—and the number of deaths and injuries—by providing residents with the world's first wide-scale earthquake prediction system, which became operational on Monday.

The city is hoping that, with its extremely high population density and little space available to build new shelters, giving residents more information and even a slight heads up will cut down on confusion, mitigate the secondary damage caused by fires and encourage them to plan ahead for how to cope and where to go.

The new warning system uses data provided by the Meteorological Agency, which maintains an intricate network of sensors deep underground nationwide that estimate the intensity of a quake as soon as the ground ruptures.

The system works by detecting primary waves, which spread from the epicenter of a quake and travel faster than the destructive shear waves. When primary waves of a certain intensity are detected, the alarms are set off as much as 30 seconds ahead of the shear waves. Public broadcaster NHK will relay the warning almost instantaneously to its television and radio audience.

The system is not perfect. Still, the agency says the system already helped it issue a tsunami alert for a magnitude-6.9 earthquake in northern Japan this March two minutes faster than its old early warning system would have. The agency was also able to put out a warning ahead of July's magnitude-6.8 quake.

Otherwise, the city's options are limited.

Tokyo is rattled by dozens of mild to moderate tremors each year.

But every 70 years or so, the fault line under Tokyo produces a catastrophic earthquake—and the city, scientists say, is long overdue. The last Big One came Sept. 1, 1923, with a magnitude of 8.3 and killed more than 140,000 people.

In the worst-case scenario, as many as 7,800 people could die and Japan could suffer about 112 trillion yen ($974 billion) in economic damage, according to government estimates.

According to a 2005 study, about 3 million of Tokyo's 12.5 million residents may also be forced to look for emergency shelters. But a Cabinet Office survey of the local governments that make up Tokyo completed in July found as many as 600,000 people could find themselves turned away for lack of space.

The number of people searching for space could be cut to as low as 490,000 if evacuees are directed or find their way to shelters not in their neighborhood. *AP*

KASPAROV, former world chess champion, a fierce critic of President Vladimir Putin. AP

Kasparov picked to fight in Russia poll

MOSCOW—CHESS GREAT GARRY KASparov was named Sunday as the Other Russia opposition coalition's candidate for 2008 presidential polls, and vowed to fight for democracy against the Kremlin's political juggernaut.

Kasparov overwhelmingly won a party congress vote against five other contenders to run in the March 2, 2008, election to replace President Vladimir Putin.

"I will do everything possible for the ideas of Other Russia to win. This will work only if we stay united," he told the meeting, adding the coalition stood for a "democratic and just Russia."

He won 379 of 494 votes cast, outpolling other nominees including former prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov and former Central Bank chief Viktor Gerashchenko.

The Other Russia coalition, comprised of a variety of small groups opposed to Putin, is heavily handicapped by internal divisions and has been marginalized by the authorities.

While Putin has promised the elections will give Russian voters a free choice, most observers expect a carefully managed transition to a figure favored by the current administration.

Putin is obliged to stand down having completed two presidential terms, although he has said he will retain an unspecified influential role.

Kasparov frequently attacks Putin's Kremlin for its alleged corruption and "dictatorship," and its dominance of the media to silence genuine opposition parties.

Born of Armenian-Jewish parents in Baku, the capital of the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, in 1963, Kasparov took up chess at the age of six.

He was USSR junior champion by the age of 13, before becoming the youngest world chess champion at the age of 22 in 1985, having beaten his compatriot Karpov. *AFP*

PHOTO taken in 2000 shows the first Miss Moneypenny, Lois Maxwell (left), and the current, Samantha Bond, posing with guns used in earlier James Bond movies. AFP

'Miss Moneypenny'; 80

SYDNEY—ON SCREEN, LOIS Maxwell played the woman James Bond never seduced, Miss Moneypenny. In real life, she was more than his match—an adventurous traveler, an entertainer, and a flirt to the end.

Her death on Saturday at Fremantle Hospital, in Western Australia, from a combination of lung and vascular disease, followed several weeks of treatment there. She was 80.

The Canadian-born actress, a constant in 14 James Bond movies as the starring role changed hands, took on the Miss Moneypenny role in 1962 alongside Sean Connery in "Dr No."

And she continued to play the secretary to spy chief M, constantly flirting with her 007 agent, until 1985's "A View To A Kill" with Roger Moore.

In a 2005 interview, Maxwell said she insisted when she took on the role that she be allowed to give Moneypenny a "background" and that Bond director Terence Young not "put my hair in a bun and horn-rimmed glasses on me."

The "background" was an unexplained sexual tension between Moneypenny and Bond and the chemistry worked.

"She was my lucky token," Moore told the British broadcaster Sky News after her death.

"(People) who remember the Bond films with Moneypenny will remember her with great affection. She certainly will be missed by me and I'm sure by millions of fans around the world."

Born Lois Ruth Hooker on February 14, 1927 in Ontario, Canada, Maxwell ran away from home at 16 to join the Canadian Army Show.

She changed her name in Hollywood, won a Golden Globe award and worked with Ronald Reagan on "Bedtime For Bonzo."

When the first Bond movie came along, Maxwell was an experienced actor in need of an income after her husband, British television executive Peter Marriott, developed a heart problem. *AFP*

Study defends assisted suicide

PORTLAND, OREGON—DOCTOR-ASSISTED suicide in the Netherlands and the only US state where it is legal does not result in more deaths among certain groups of terminally ill patients such as the poor or the elderly, according to a controversial new study.

Critics quickly dismissed the study, to be published in the October issue of the Journal of Medical Ethics, saying its leader failed to disclose she is a member of the advisory board of the Death With Dignity National Center, a nonprofit that defends the Oregon assisted suicide law and coordinates support for legalizing assisted suicide in other states.

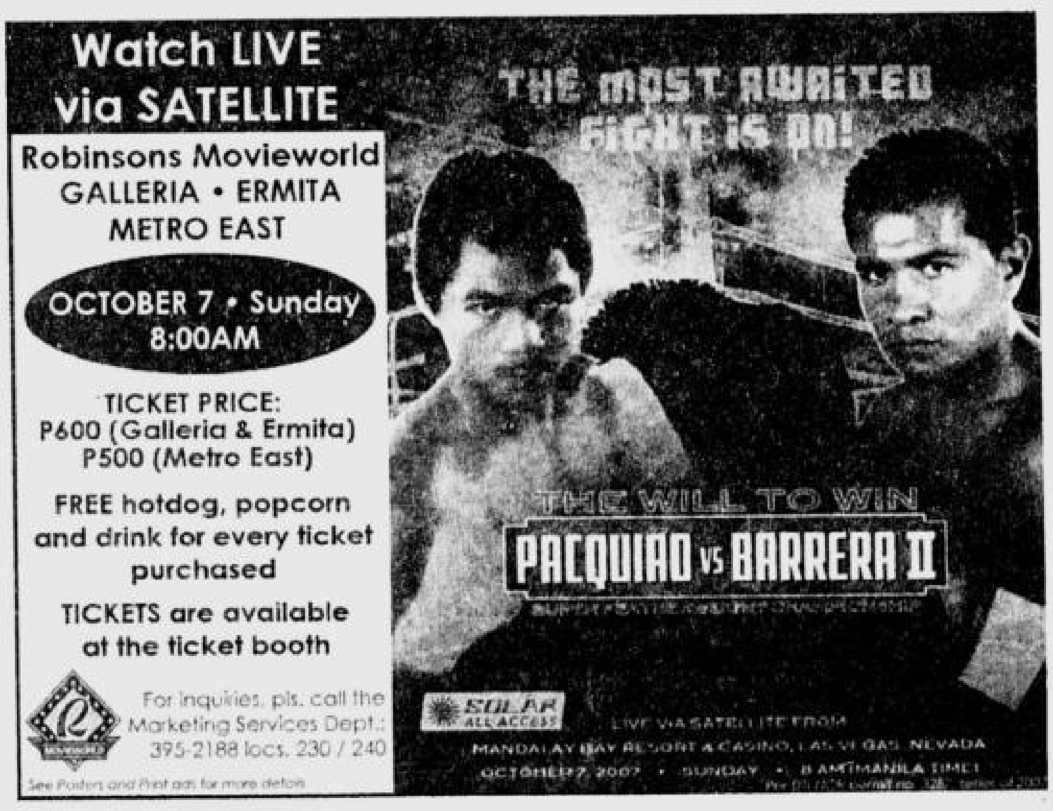
The study leader, University of Utah bioethicist Margaret Battin, argued that three doctors and a public health researcher were co-authors and that her views are well known. She admitted she should have disclosed her board role.

The study analyzed nearly a decade of data from Oregon—the only US state with an assisted suicide law—and 20 years in the Netherlands. The results contradict claims by opponents that allowing doctors to help terminally ill patients end their lives would result in a higher number of deaths among certain groups.

The study looked at 10 groups identified as vulnerable, including the elderly, the poor, women, minorities, the uninsured, children, the chronically ill, the less educated, AIDS patients and psychiatric patients.

Researchers found that in both Oregon and the Netherlands, the average age of patients who died with a doctor's assistance was 70 years old. Eighty percent of the patients suffered from cancer.

Only AIDS patients appeared to request assisted suicide at higher rates than the general population, researchers said. The higher rate among AIDS patients, however, was for homosexual men in the Netherlands between 1985 and 1995, before more effective drugs became available to control the disease, the study said. *AP*



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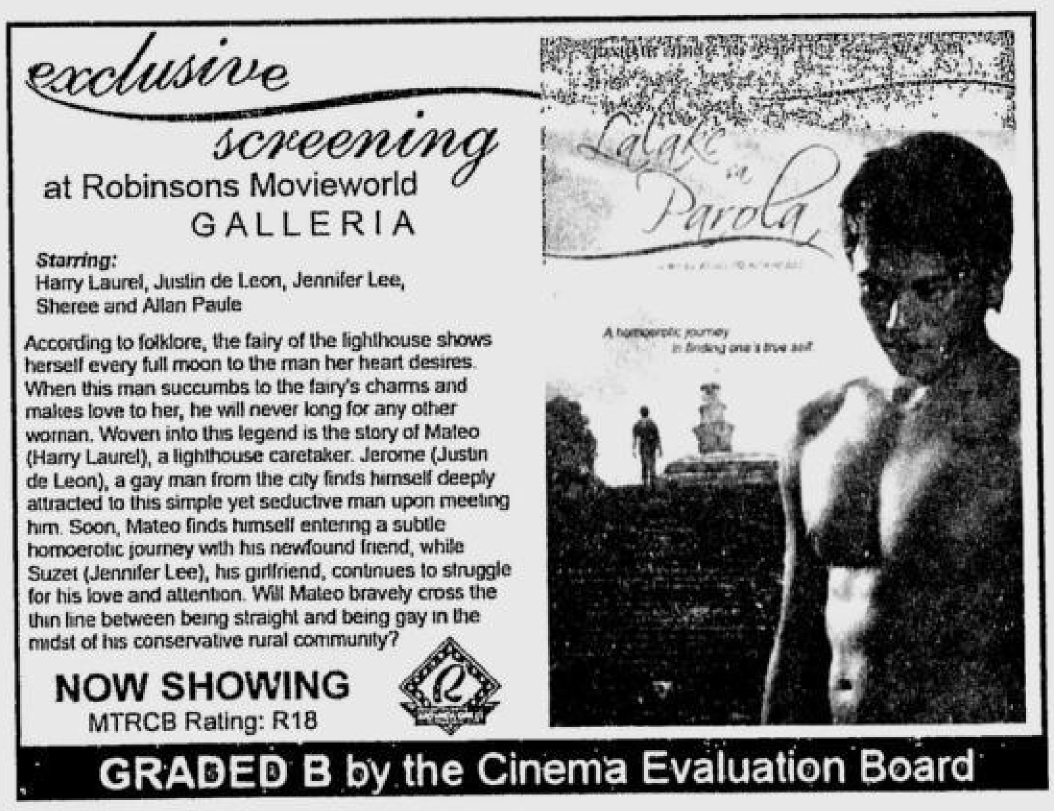

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

US still world's top arms supplier

WASHINGTON—The United States maintained its role as the leading supplier of weapons to the developing world in 2006, followed by Russia and Britain, according to a congressional study to be released Monday. Pakistan, India and Saudi Arabia were the top buyers.

The global arms market is highly competitive, with manufacturing nations seeking both to increase profits and expand political influence through weapons sales to developing nations, which reached nearly $28.8 billion in 2006.

That sales total was a slight drop from the 2005 figure of $31.8 billion, a trend explained by the strain of rising fuel prices that prompted many developing states—except those that produce oil—to choose upgrading current arsenals over buying new weapons.

The report, "Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations," was produced by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, a division of the Library of Congress, and presents a number of interesting observations linking arms sales and global politics.

For example, Russia has been a major supplier of weapons to Iran in past years, including a $700 million deal for surface-to-air missiles in 2005. But anxieties over Iran's nuclear program can be seen as having deterred Moscow from concluding significant new conventional arms deals with Iran in 2006, deals that could be viewed as overly provocative while the Security Council debates new sanctions on Iran.

The study makes clear also that the United States has signed weapons-sales agreements with nations whose records on democracy and human rights are subject to official criticism.

The announcement of major new arms agreements with Pakistan last year renewed debate over whether the Bush administration was elevating its counterterrorism priorities above its pledge to spread democracy around the world.

Pakistan was a major recipient of American arms sales in 2006, including the $1.4 billion purchase of 36 new F-16C/D fighter aircraft and $640 million in missiles and bombs. The deal included a package for $890 million in upgrades for Pakistan's older versions of the F-16. *NYT*

Israel freeing 87 Palestinians to aid Abbas

KITSYOT, ISRAEL—ISRAEL'S RELEASE OF 87 jailed Palestinians, a move aimed at bolstering Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, ran into a delay on Monday but an Israeli official said the prisoners would go free within hours.

The prisoners, members of Abbas' Fatah or smaller secular factions, were led in handcuffs out of the desert stockade of Kitsyot onto buses that were to have headed to the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Sources at the prison said the buses did not leave as planned in the early morning and the men were taken back to their cells.

"The prisoner release has been delayed because of technical reasons, but it will be completed by this afternoon," an Israeli government official said, giving no further details.

The freeing of prisoners is highly emotive for Palestinians, who see their nearly 11,000 brethren held in Israeli jails as fighters against Israeli occupation. Many in Israel say such amnesties encourage violence by Palestinian militants.

"I hope there will be peace and quiet," one Gazan inmate told Reuters Television while waiting to leave Kitsyot.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who is to meet Abbas on Wednesday to discuss their peacemaking agenda, said last week that only prisoners "without blood on their hands"—a reference to deadly attacks against the Jewish state—and willing to sign a document renouncing violence would be freed.

Fatah lost control of Gaza in June to Hamas Islamists, who reject peace efforts with Israel, including the Middle East conference planned for mid-to-late November under US auspices.

Palestinians are divided on whether the talks will bring them closer to statehood. Olmert wants them to produce a broad-brush joint statement, while Abbas seeks an explicit "framework" agreement with a timeline for implementation.

It is unclear to what extent Olmert is prepared to meet Abbas' call to tackle "final status" issues key to establishing a Palestinian state: Border-setting, the future of Jerusalem and the fate of millions of Palestinian refugees.

Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said the conference, which representatives of Arab states are also expected to attend, was "preoccupying the entire world." But she also cautioned against any detailed agenda discussions in public.

"Our role, and that of the Palestinians, is to find the broadest possible common ground," Livni told Israel Radio. *Reuters*

MEMBERS of South Korea's special warfare command perform the traditional martial art Taekwondo at the 59th Armed Forces Day ceremony at the military headquarters in Gyeryong, on Oct. 1. REUTERS

Money, not nuclear arms, on table at summit of divided Koreas

By Jon Herskovitz

SEOUL—THE LEADERS OF DIVIDED Korea will share smiles this week and talk cash but skirt around Pyongyang's nuclear arms ambitions and human rights abuses in favor of fostering dreams of unification.

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun said he wants peace between the states, technically still at war, and may pledge billions of dollars for the North's beleaguered economy when he meets Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang for the Oct. 2-4 summit.

"South Korea's economic cooperation is aimed at reducing military tension," said Jeong Hyung-gon, a research fellow at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy. "A peaceful peninsula has a direct impact on South Korea's economy."

South Korea has lived for decades with the North's military threat, but it fears a sudden collapse of Kim's government and worries that the hundreds of billions of dollars it would cost to absorb its impoverished neighbor would wreck its own economy.

North Korea's creaking economy has become a shambles under Kim while his neighbor's has surged. Hit hard by massive summer floods and UN sanctions for its October 2006 nuclear test, North Korea depends on food and oil handouts.

The summit—only the second between the erstwhile foes since the peninsula was divided after World War II—will be high on symbols of unification. North Korean civilians in their finest clothes are certain to be sent out into Pyongyang's streets to cheer the leader of South Korea—a country the North has trained its 1.2-million-man Army to attack.

Roh will lead a motorcade from Seoul to Pyongyang on Tuesday, steeping out of his bullet-proof limousine to become the first leader from the South to walk across the hugely fortified border.

In the Northern capital, he is to witness an extravaganza featuring goose-stepping soldiers, dancing schoolgirls and a massive flip card animation section that promotes unification—but under the North's communist banner.

According to some media reports, Roh plans to give film buff Kim Jong-il a huge flat panel television, despite UN sanctions that forbid the trade in luxury goods.

The first summit in June 2000—also held in Pyongyang—broke the ice in the two states' Cold War rivalry and launched economic and humanitarian projects.

Officials said Roh might propose new projects to rebuild the North's dilapidated infrastructure and develop joint economic zones in the isolated state where its own dynamic manufacturers could further exploit cheap land and labor.

Most South Koreans want unification, but a recent survey said that three in four want the process to move slowly.

Critics worry Roh may pledge so much in aid that North Korea will feel it can spurn incentives offered by regional powers to scrap its nuclear arms program, one of Asia's greatest security threats. *Reuters*

Fatal US plane crashes drop 65 percent over 10 years

WASHINGTON—AFTER TWO INFAMOUS crashes in 1996 that together killed 375 people, a White House commission told the airline industry and its regulators to reduce the domestic rate of fatal accidents 80 percent over 10 years. That clock ended Sunday.

They have come close to reaching that goal. Barring a crash before midnight Sunday, the drop in the accident rate will be about 65 percent, to one fatal accident in about 4.5 million departures, from one in nearly 2 million in 1997.

There have been no fatal airliner crashes involving scheduled flights this year in the United States and just one fatal accident: A mechanic who was trying to close the cabin door of a chartered Boeing 737 on the ground in Tunica, Miss., fell to the pavement during a rainstorm.

"This is the golden age of safety, the safest period, in the safest mode, in the history of the world," said Marion C. Blakey, the administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, in a speech to an aviation group in Washington on Sept. 11, two days before her five-year term ended.

Some of the improvement may be luck, as there is an element of randomness to crashes. But part of the explanation certainly lies in the payoff from sustained efforts by American and many foreign airlines to identify and eliminate small problems that are common precursors to accidents.

Airlines around the world, even in less-developed nations, have also benefited from equipment improvements, like cockpit instruments that help planes steer clear of mountains when visibility is poor, and jet engines that are so reliable that pilots can go through their entire careers without seeing one fail.

Some improvements have been as simple as better signs on taxiways to prevent planes from moving into the path of other aircraft.

"It's not one thing. It's a series of small things," said John Cox, who was an Air Line Pilots Association safety representative for 20 years.

Despite the safety improvements since then, not all the trends are positive. Airports have lately recorded a disturbing number of what they call "proximity events" because someone made a wrong turn or a controller made an error. On July 11, for example, a United plane in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., took a wrong turn onto a runway where a Delta Air Lines plane was supposed to land; the two came within 100 feet, according to the FAA. *NYT*

Pragmatic admiral takes the helm as American military's top officer

MULLEN reviewing officials at the 2007 Dedication Parade at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., on May 21. AP

WASHINGTON—THE US MILITARY completes a leadership change Monday with the arrival of a pragmatic navy admiral to help steer it through the more-than-four-year-old war in Iraq.

Admiral Michael Mullen, former chief of US naval operations, takes over as chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from Marine Corps General Peter Pace at a ceremony at a Civil War-era fort overlooking the Potomac River.

Mullen, 60, is expected to bring a fresh perspective to a military stretched to the breaking point by repeated deployments and facing challenges beyond the Iraq war, including Iran's potential emergence as a nuclear power.

"We must rebalance our strategic risks carefully and as soon as possible," Mullen said in his Senate confirmation hearing in July.

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who has said he wants to approach Iraq in its regional context, said Mullen was chosen because "he is a very smart strategic thinker" who took a broad view of the military's needs and requirements.

Mullen has a wealth of naval experience. Before taking the helm of the navy in July 2005, he commanded US naval forces in Europe and Nato's Joint Force Command in Naples.

A Los Angeles native, he graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1968, served in Vietnam, commanded surface warships and a carrier battle group, and found time to study management at Harvard Business School.

Mullen sailed through his confirmation hearings, making clear to senators that he was doubtful there can be a military solution in Iraq without political reconciliation.

"Barring that, no amount of troops and no amount of time will make much of a difference," he said. *AFP*

TV viewing by toddler should be curbed by age 5, study says

CHICAGO—YOUNG CHILDREN's television viewing presents a dilemma to parents aware of potential harm to development, but a study released on Monday said children who stop watching so much by age 5 1/2 do not exhibit problems.

"A number of studies have demonstrated negative effects of heavy television viewing. However, timing of exposure is an important consideration," said study author Kamila Mistry of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

"Reducing viewing to acceptable levels can reduce the risk of behavioral and social problems," she concluded, based on the study published in Pediatrics, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The pediatricians' group has issued guidelines that discourage television viewing among children younger than 2 years, and recommend children older than 2 to limit their viewing to less than two hours daily. The group also recommends against having a television in a child's bedroom.

"Despite these recommendations, many young children are consuming significantly more than two hours of television," the report said.

The researchers analyzed interviews conducted three years apart with the mothers of roughly 2,700 children to learn the children's viewing habits and whether they tended to be anxious, depressed, have sleep problems, have trouble concentrating, exhibit aggressive behavior or lack social skills.

Sixteen percent of the children in the study had watched television more than two hours daily at the age of 2-1/2, but then cut back on viewing by the age of 5-1/2.

"Children who reduced their viewing by 5-1/2 years of age were not at greater risk for behavior or social problems," said Dr. Cynthia Minkovitz, who also worked on the study.

The one out of five children who watched at least two hours of television a day throughout the study period were at greatest risk of behavioral problems. Also, children who developed the TV-watching habit by age 5 were at somewhat higher risk.

Two out of five of the 5-year-olds in the study had a television in their bedrooms, which put them at risk of sleeping problems, the report said. *Reuters*

WHAT'S INSIDE

Nietes is 4th Pinoy world ring champ /A22

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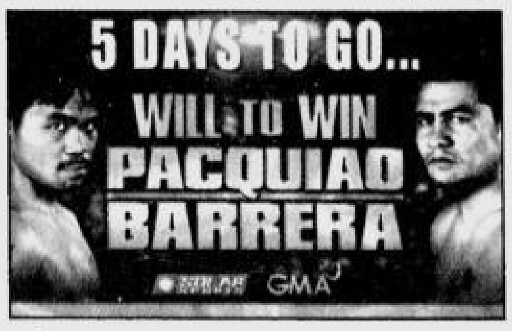


Pacquiao drives to battle site

By Recah Trinidad

LOS ANGELES—MANNY Pacquiao yesterday had an overdue haircut, shaved his goatee then looked at the mirror and quipped that he looked much younger now.

"*Nagmukhang bata ako, ah* (I look younger)," he declared before team hands, visibly amused at his "clean" appearance.

Pacquiao did not say it but the ritual shearing could also be his way of shifting to war mode.

He motors today to the battle site in Las Vegas for the monumental Oct. 6 rematch with Mexico's Marco Antonio Barrera.

He did not mean to be rude, but claiming he has visibly shaved off years spoke of the brimming native confidence about a repeat conquest of Barrera, whom he stopped four years ago.

Volumes have been spoken and written about the rematch but, more than the thematic will to win, age will surely be the deciding factor in the second encounter between the two great warriors.

Barrera, 33, will not need a facial makeover, a bit of sissy powder, as he still looks young as a legitimate movie-world hero.

AFTER sporting a goatee and long hair during training, Manny Pacquiao gets a trim before driving off to Las Vegas. RECAH TRINIDAD

No war statement

But he will have to surpass himself to beat the many years that have started to conspire against his legs.

Definitely at his peak, Pacquiao again refused to issue a war statement, a dirty job left with trainer Freddie Roach.

"We're working double time to shorten the punches," Roach explained before the weekend break.

He however no longer spoke of the killer blow, a fresh addition to the Pacquiao arsenal, which he has been perfecting almost in secret with Pacquiao.

"*Sa laban na lang magkaalaman kung sino talaga ang magaling* (We'll know who's better on the fight itself)," Pacquiao, obviously tired of the useless chatter from the opposing camp, declared last week.

Tapering off

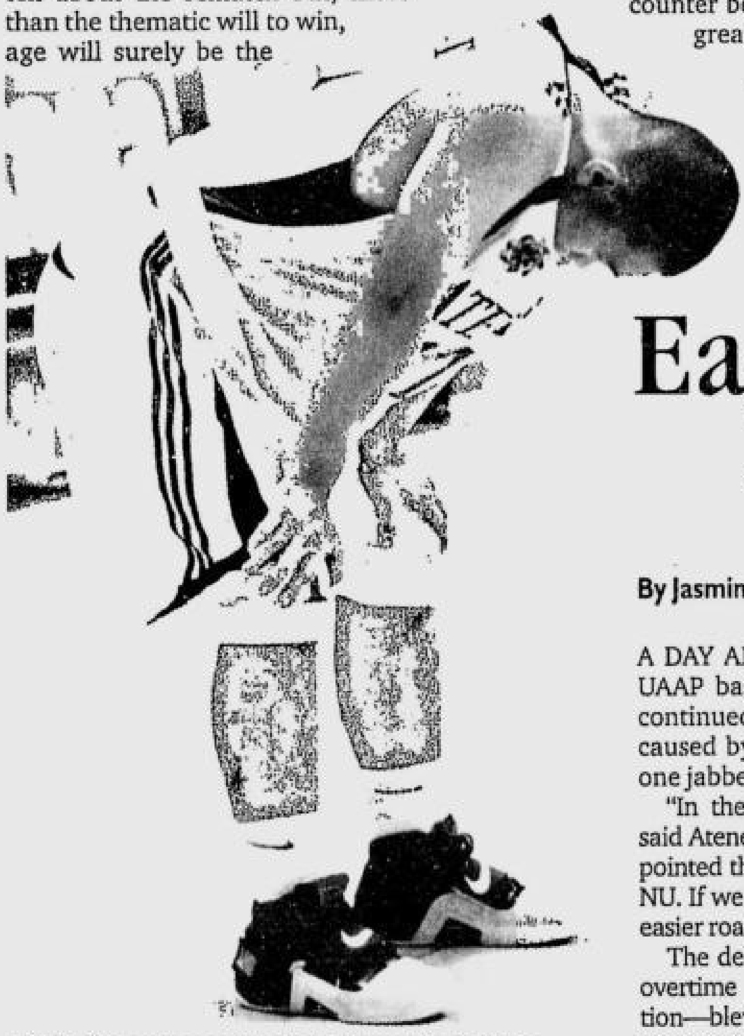
Pacquiao has already totaled 130 rounds of sparring, but he closes training here with another session, before the tapering off portion in Las Vegas.

He had another big meal—chop suey and fried salt water fish—before going to mass where he led in the offering.

Youth will definitely be on Pacquiao's side but Barrera, whom the Pacman called the strongest of the Mexicans he has fought, won't again allow himself to be intimated and pushed around.

For one, Barrera had a more composed training camp than the one Pacquiao had in Cebu City.

Pacquiao has displayed boundless stamina and punching power at Wild Card. But his defense was less than perfect.



THERE'S next season to look forward to for Eric Salamat and the Blue Eagles. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

UAAP AFTERMATH

Eagles gear up for next season's flight

GAME THURSDAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
3 p.m.—Univ. of the East vs La Salle
(Game 1 of best-of-three series)

By Jasmine W. Payo

A DAY AFTER ATENEO BOWED OUT OF THE UAAP basketball competition, the Blue Eagles continued to feel the sting. Not just the one caused by long-time rival La Salle, but also the one jabbed on them by the National U Bulldogs.

"In the end, there's obvious disappointment," said Ateneo coach Norman Black. "We were disappointed that we lost not just to La Salle but also to NU. If we didn't lose to NU, it would have been an easier road for us to the Finals."

The debacle against the NU Bulldogs—a 96-88 overtime upset on the last day of elimination—blew the Eagles' bid for the twice-to-beat advantage in the semifinals.

The Eagles settled for a share of second place with the Green Archers, but they fell further to third place after dropping the playoff match that gave their rivals the twice-to-beat bonus.

And it did turn out to be an advantage as the Archers needed two games to claim the last Finals berth. Avenging their first semifinal loss, the Archers advanced to the championship with a 65-60 triumph in the rivals' winner-take-all showdown last Sunday.

But the setback isn't grounding the Eagles for long with plans already afoot for next season.

"Definitely he has signed up for next year," said team manager Paolo Trillo of Black, who will be on board for the fourth straight season. "We're meeting [today] to map out the plans for next year."

Several collegiate tournaments are being lined up including the Champions League, the Fr. Martin's Cup and possibly the PBL.

Black is also excited with his next recruitment class that will include NCAA juniors Most Valuable Player Ryan Buenafe of San Sebastian and Chiang Kai Shek center Justin Chua.

Buenafe created a buzz in the recent NCAA juniors tournament by leading the Staglets to the title with his all-around performances, some of which resulted into triple doubles. The six-foot-five Chua, on the other hand, is considered as the best high school prospect under the radar.

The two are expected to more than make up for the graduation of Ford Arao and Zion Laterre, and will link up with veteran Chris Tiu and promising upstarts Eric Salamat, Yuri Escueta and Nonoy Baclao.

"If you look at the overall picture, the team achieved more than what people expected us to achieve," said Black.

"Obviously we didn't have the talent level that we had last year. But the players nobody expected to do well improved a lot this UAAP season from the last season. Again, we'll work on the players' skills. The UAAP is a veteran's league. Normally, teams that have quality veterans are the ones who rule. The veterans are really the key."

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BMW Motorsport Units

RP lady shooter scores stunning upset

By June Navarro

SOMEBODY HAS JUST PUT THE Philippines in the practical shooting world map.

Grace Tan bagged the ladies' open crown in the European Intercontinental Handgun Championship held recently in Cheval Blanc, France, besting reigning world ladies champion Gabriele Kraushofer of Austria.

A two-time silver medalist in the world championships for practical shooting, Tan collected 1,353 points while Kraushofer had 1,314.

The Austrian bet, who captured the 2005 World Shoot Championships in Ecuador, was followed by Czech Republic's Lenka Herejsi who put together 1,309 points for the bronze medal.

"I was in good shape during the entire tournament," said the 30-year-old Tan, also a silver medalist in the 1996 (Brazil) and 1999 (Cebu City) editions of the World Shoot, highly regarded as the Olympics of practical shooting.

"It was probably the result of all the difficulties I've been through while training for this event," Tan added.

With more than a thousand snipers from 50 countries participating, the European Intercontinental Handgun Championship is held every two years, or one year before the world championships.

Tan, who used a nine-millimeter STI custom-made gun, said the event would provide her ample experience in time for the World Shoot XIV in Bali, Indonesia, in September next year.

Nietes is 4th Pinoy world ring champ

By Salven L. Lagumbay and Dong Secuya, *Contributors*

DONNIE Nietes celebrates with his handlers.

DONG SECUYA/PHILBOXING.COM

CEBU CITY—UNHERALDED NEGRENSE DONNIE NIETES WON BY UNANimous decision over previously undefeated Pornsawan Kratingdaenggym of Thailand to capture the WBO minimumweight crown at the Waterfront Cebu Hotel Sunday night and give the Philippines its fourth world title this year.

Nietes, from Murcia, Negros Occidental, raised his record to 22 wins and one defeat with 13 knockouts while handing Cebu's famed ALA Boxing Gym of Antonio L. Aldeguer its maiden world crown.

The judges saw it 116-110, 115-111 and 114-113, all for Nietes.

Boxing beautifully and showing excellent defensive skills, Nietes sent Porsawan (20-1-0, 15 KOs) to the canvas with a body and head combination, capped by a right straight to the jaw, midway in the fourth round.

The Thai charged back and won the fifth round, but Nietes won several of the remaining rounds through effective counter punching. Pornsawan was deducted a point in the 10th round by referee Raul Caiz for low blows.

Meanwhile, a Thai revealed that Porsawan indeed used "Chai Che Chew," better known as ammonia, during the fight. Trainer Juanito Ablaca confiscated the small bottle containing ammonia from Porsawan's corner after the fight.

Games and Amusement Board physician Jose Unabia said the post-fight urine test he did on Pornsawan was positive for ephedrine, a regulated substance, that could have been triggered by the use of ammonia.

WBO Asia Pacific chair Leon Panoncillo has issued a statement saying that ammonia is not allowed in any fight, adding he will confer with the WBO on what step to take next.

Undercard results

Rising star AJ "Bazooka" Banal knocked down Mexican super flyweight champ Esau Gaona on the way to a first-round victory to capture the WBO Asia Pacific Youth super flyweight title.

Robert Allanic successfully defended his WBO Asia-Pacific bantamweight crown over Song In-suk of Korea via an 11th round TKO.

Rocky Fuentes beat Danilo Lerio over 12 rounds to keep his Philippine flyweight title.

Super featherweight James Bacon, fighting in his second pro fight, sent Roldan Sayson of Cagayan de Oro to the stretchers via a 3rd round TKO.

Nietes thus joined the exclusive group of reigning Filipino world champs Florante Condes (minimumweight, IBF), Nonito Donaire, Jr. (flyweight, IBF, IBO) and Gerry Peñalosa (bantamweight, WBO).

British star bulldozes Briones' Beijing bid

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND—ALEXANDER Briones showed a lot of heart, but heart rarely register on the scoreboard.

The last jin deployed by the Philippines to hunt for an Olympic berth engaged hometown poster boy Aaron Cook in a slam-bang -80kg division encounter but ended up bowing, 5-1, in the World Taekwondo Qualifying at the Manchester Evening News Arena here Sunday.

Skipping the first round after his opponent from Central Africa, Ben Guorion Madanga, failed to get his visa, the 22-year-old Briones bravely bucked the jeers from the crowd but mainly failed to get the points his corner felt he deserved.

"*Hindi po ako apektado ng* (I wasn't affected by the) crowd, *pero baka yung mga* (but I think the) referees *apektado* (were affected)," said the 2004 and 2006 Asian championships bronze medalist of his 16-year-old foe considered the wonderboy of British taekwondo.

He was referring to the opening moments of the third round when the referees logged in to two successive points to the Briton following a raging exchange where both fighters connected. That gave the local bet a 5-2 advantage from 2-3 at the close of the second round.

RP coach Roberto "Kitoy" Cruz questioned it but the corner referees stood up and decided that the score would stand. Later in the round, Briones was even stripped of one point for grabbing Cook.

"*Ang daming* (There were several) points *na dapat para sa atin* (that should have been for us), *pero siyempre* (but of course it's) hometown *kaya magaang ang pindot ng mga* (so awarding the opponent the points was easy for the) referees," said Cruz.

Favorites, locals rock nat'l boxing tourney

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE FAvorites, led by Godfrey Castro and Joegen Ladon, stamped their class even as local bets made their presence felt at the start of hostilities in the National Open Boxing Championships here Monday.

CUBA'S champion boxing coach Dr. Alcimedes Sagarra Caron demonstrates proper fighting stance at yesterday's lecture at the Pelaez Sports Complex. Caron is helping the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines coach the coaches.

RAFFY LERMA

Castro, a Doha Asian Games bronze medalist who's been in the training pool for six years, whipped Iligan City's Michael Denila via RSC-CCL (referee-stopped contest-compulsory count limit) in the bantamweight class to key Philippine Army's early show of force.

Philippine Navy/Bago City-A team's Ladon, silver medalist in both the 2003 Helsinki World Championship and the 2005 Manila Southeast Asian Games, won over Gingoog City's Rexam Borja via RSC-Outclassed in 1:59 of the first round of their lightweight division bout.

Not to be outdone, host Misamis Oriental's bets Jefferson Suan, Tappcine and Merlito Buhjan gave local fans a treat at the front of the Provincial Capitol of Misamis.

Suan forced Rubin Lobrido of PN/Bago City to retirement in the fourth round of their bantamweight clash while Tappcine won on points over Zamboanga City's Leo Militante, 22-17, in their lightweight encounter. Buhjah was declared winner by walkover over Sorsogon's Adrian Lorin,

"*Medyo madali po ang laban ko kasi wala pa po gaanong* experience *yung kalaban* (My fight was quite easy because I had an inexperienced opponent)," said the 22-year-old Castro, an Army corporal.

Philippine Navy's teams A and B likewise had a boxer each winning on opening day of this tournament serving as an audition for boxers hoping to make it to the training pool.

PN/Bago City-B's Rene Villaluz of team B turned back Gary Garicia of Davao Del Sur in another RSC-O in the lightweight division.

Castro, gold medalist in the same tournament held in Palawan last year, pummeled the hapless Denila with a barrage of punches, forcing the referee to stop the contest with 1:29 minutes left in the first round.

The win propelled Castro to the quarterfinals in the company of Jay-R Quiam of the Elorde Boxing Team.

"I saw Quiam win and he's likely to be my main challenger," said Castro in Filipino who outpointed Gary Lastrilla of Philippine Navy/Bago City, 27-16, in another bantamweight bout.

Roberto Jalnaiz's son, Rafael, failed to give Misamiz Oriental complete jubilation when he lost on points to Romielyn Endaya of Bukidon, 3-12, in the kids' 26-kilogram class at Ring A.

Record field vying in Toby's youth b'minton

A BANNER FIELD WILL COMPETE FOR TOP honors in various age categories in the fifth annual Toby's Sports youth badminton tournament this month at the West Drive Badminton Center in Pasig City and SM Megamall.

The championships have grown into a national event, giving players 8 to 18 years old a venue to enhance their skills in a competition managed by professionals.

Registration, ongoing at all outlets of the country's pioneer in sporting goods, will end on Oct. 8.

Events to be disputed are singles, doubles and mixed doubles for boys and girls in six age divisions, namely, 8-under, 10-under, 12-under, 14-under, 16-under and 18-under.

Elimination matches will be held at the West Drive Badminton Center in Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig City, from Oct. 27 to 31 and Nov. 2 to 4 while the finals in all age divisions will be on Nov. 9 to 11 at SM Megamall.

"This has been the advocacy of Toby's Sports for the last four years—to develop positive values and healthy living through sports activities among the youth," said Toby Claudio, operations manager of Toby's Sports.

Pumaren vs Pumaren: Brothers discuss title duel

UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST COACH DINDO PUMAREN AND ELDER BROTHer Franz Pumaren of La Salle talk about their much-awaited showdown for this year's UAAP men's basketball championship as they appear in tomorrow's session of the PSA Forum at the Shakey's UN Avenue branch.

The Archers arranged the title clash after eliminating arch rival Ateneo Blue Eagles in their thrilling playoff for the second finals berth Sunday.

The Warriors had earlier advanced to the best-of-three series by virtue of their 14-game sweep of the eliminations.

Also guesting in the 10:30 a.m. program aired live over Sports Radio 918 and sponsored by Shakey's and Pagcor is Toby Claudio off Toby's Sports who will discuss the coming 5th Toby's Youth Badminton tournament.

MICROVAN
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San Beda relives Caloy Loyzaga's golden era

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO TALK ABOUT it, I say prospects look good for San Beda, the back-to-back National Collegiate Athletic Association champion, to score a "three-peat" and relive the good old days in the 1950s when the legendary Carlos "Caloy" Loyzaga led the Red Lions to three NCAA titles.

San Beda did it in 1951, 1952 and 1955 to retire the then much-coveted Zamora Trophy.

But unlike in the past, when the forbidding presence of the 6-foot-3 Loyzaga (a rarity among local players at that time) turned impending defeat into victory, hence the apt moniker "The Big Difference," this year's champion San Beda team banked heavily on a trio of cagers to nail its 13th NCAA title behind Letran (15), the losing finalist this year and former member Ateneo (14).

* * *

Playing big roles for the winners were mohawk-haired Ogie Menor, a well-built, 20-year-old 6-foot-3 prized forward who was named the Finals MVP; pro-bound Yousif Aljamal, a sweet-shooting 6-4 player who is set to join Talk 'N Text in the PBA this season; and tall and beefy Sam Ekwe, the 6-foot-8 Nigerian rebounder, who won last year's MVP award.

Although two players will be missed next season—Aljamal and reserve forward Raymund Maggay, who is graduating—the team is close to intact.

Thus, it is safe to say that San Beda coach Frankie Lim is extremely lucky since two talented players from the team's junior ranks are slated to beef up his team, namely, the 6-foot-5 Kevin Udo, another Nigerian who has the makings of a future Sam Ekwe; and last year's juniors Top Rookie-MVP 6-foot-4 Elvin Pascual.

Lim is also counting on his other impact-performers like Borgie Hermida, Pong Escobal, Chico Tirona, top rookie Dave Marcelo, Bam-Bam Gamalinda, Jay-R Taganas, Ed Tecson and Garvo Lanete.

* * *

A dynasty in the making?

"We are not really talking about that," said the 47-year-old Lim, who played for the champion San Beda team in 1977 and 1978. "*Masyadong maaga* (It's premature)."

But he said that it felt great winning the title on his maiden stint as coach. "It's very rewarding."

Praising his players, Lim said they are all intelligent, *may puso* (with a fighting heart). "We're up against a tough team (Letran) but I told them not to doubt their capabilities."

"I got my confidence when my shots started to go in," stressed Menor, who top-scored for San Beda with 25 points in Game 2 after hitting 23 in Game 1, two games the Red Lions won to sweep the best-of-three title series.

Aljamal said it was time to celebrate. He missed two games of the final eliminations after he was barred by NCAA officials for failing to ask the permission of the league when he joined the PBA Rookie Draft a few weeks ago. But he was able to rejoin the team in the Final Four.

* * *

THE 12th World Special Olympic Games get going today in Shanghai, with some 50 intellectually challenged athletes from the Philippines competing in 10 sports.

Nadia Comaneci, the legendary gymnast from Romania who scored the first perfect "10" in the sport during the 1976 Montreal Olympics, and Special Olympic International chair Dr. Timothy Shriver visited Manila recently to provide the needed boost for the special athletes.

A highlight of their visit was a well-attended fun run held at Cultural Center Complex compound which was participated by officers and employees of Procter & Gamble headed by P & G Philippine president James Michael Lafferty.

Americans have last laugh

WOODY Austin walks to the 14th green—site of his famous "dive"—wearing a dive mask during the final day of singles matches at The Royal Montreal Golf. AFP

MONTREAL—WITH FLAMBOYANT Woody Austin's gritty play and humorous antics setting the pace, US golfers extended their mastery over the Internationals with a 19 1/2-14 1/2 triumph Sunday at the Presidents Cup.

The Americans improved to 5-1-1 in the rivalry with their first triumph off US soil in a match where 43-year-old Cup debutante Austin's stumble into a lake after hitting a submerged ball was the biggest laugh for a relaxed US squad.

"The water thing is just going to add to my legacy," Austin said. "I'm the screwball anyway."

He might be just the curve ball US players need at the Ryder Cup, where US teams have lost five of their past six starts against European rivals and generally played less than their best due to tension.

"We're a little bit more loose this week. We have more fun and enjoy it. Why that translates over into our play I'm not sure," US veteran Jim Furyk said.

"I go to Ryder Cups thinking I'm going to loosen up and enjoy the week and I'm always a bit tighter. I have fun, but I'm always a little tighter.

"We pull together, we have a hell of a time and we're loose for these weeks at the Presidents Cup and we tend to gel more. I have no answer why that would be but it sure is fun to ride it while we're here."

Fiji's Vijay Singh said the US comfort zone with the Internationals, all from the US PGA Tour, is greater than when the US team meets Europe, where many of the players spend their season on the rival European Tour.

THE US team poses with the trophy at the closing ceremonies. AFP

"They are very comfortable with us. We play on the US tour. Most of our friends are Americans. We play practice rounds with the guys," Singh said.

"When they play the European side they don't even know half the side, how they play, how they interact. That's the main reason I think.

"Our game, when we play our best, it's better than theirs."

New blood like Austin might be part of the US answer as well. Austin made clutch birdies late in three matches to steal half-points and while he only went 1-1 with three halves in the week, his late rallies boosted US spirits and helped deny the Internationals momentum-building triumphs.

"He should be proud of the way he played. No one played harder," Furyk said. "No one else birdied 16, 17 and 18 when they had to."

David Toms led the US team at 4-0 and a halve after "Aquaman" Austin's 14th-hole splashdown. *AFP*

Cruz joins RP-Harbour squad

By Jasmine W. Payo

A COUPLE MORE COLLEGIATE players will join the all-amateur Philippine team set to see action in the Southeast Asian Games this December in Thailand.

Santo Tomas star Jervy Cruz and San Beda guard Pong Escobal will attend the squad's practice starting today together with 11 other players in the provisional lineup bannered by two-time PBL MVP Jason Castro

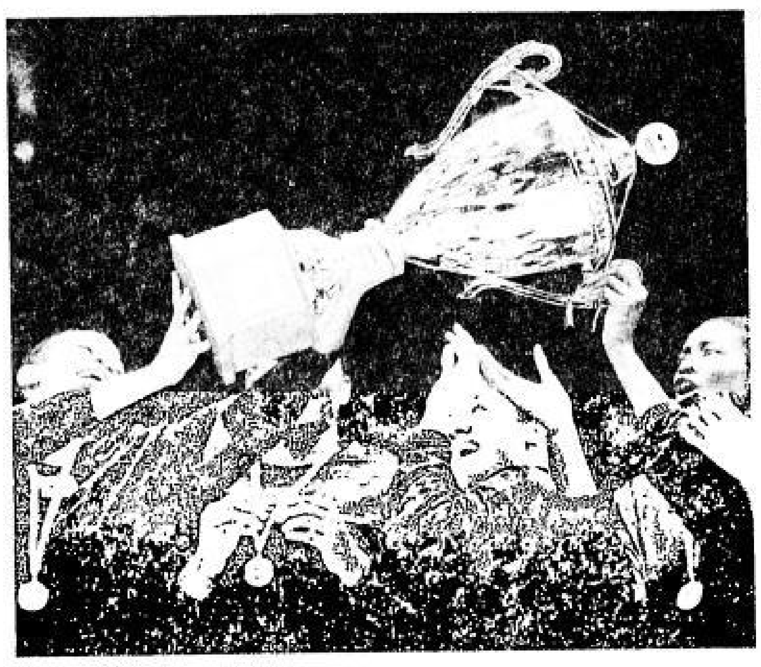
Other prospects for the team mentored by Junel Baculi include Fil-American guard Gabe Norwood, whose return date to the Philippines remains uncertain, former PBA big man Alex Crisano and La Salle center Rico Maierhofer.

Escobal recently played a key role in the Lions' back-to-back championship run in the NCAA, while the 6-foot-5 Cruz leads the UAAP Most Valuable Player race.

"I saw them play several times and given enough time to train, they will click instantly with he RP team," said Mikee Romero, Harbour Centre owner and project director of the SEAG team.

The pair will join the likes of Castro, Jonathan Fernandez, Patrick Cabahug, Jeff Chan and Beau Belga. The provisional lineup will be submitted to the SEAG task force today.

"If Norwood is available then we will take him to the team; he's a big asset and he has proven his worth for the all-pro RP team," said Erick Arejola, Harbour Centre team manager tasked to oversee the SEAG team's preparations. "As for Crisano, the guy wants to start a new career and we'll try to give him a chance."



CHAMPIONS TOO Members of USA's women's basketball team hold the trophy of the Fiba Americas Basketball Championship for women after winning against Cuba in Valdivia, southern Chile Sunday. REUTERS

Xavier captures Passerelle crown

XAVIER SCHOOL HELD OFF A FIERY RALLY by Ateneo de Manila to win, 60-57 and capture the Passerelle crown Sunday in the 2007 Milo-sponsored BEST Center SBP/Passerelle tournament at Xavier's Jacinto Tiu competition court.

Jose Antonio Manuel sank a long jumper with only 15.2 seconds left to give Xavier a 60-56 lead which the Ateneans failed to overcome as they made only one free throwout of several attempts.

Ateneo avenged its defeat later by bagging the SBP (Small Basketeers Philippines) title at the expense of last year's winner La Salle Greenhills, 84-53.

Ahead only by three points after the first quarter, the Ateneans blew the contest wide opening the next canto to take a commanding 46-26 lead at the turn.

Ateneo continued its fiery offensive behind Antonio Asistio, who scored 11 of his 13 points in the third, to seal La Salle's doom.

La Salle Greenhills and Xavier hurdled their rivals to take third in Passerelle and SBP, respectively. La Salle ripped De La Salle Zobel, 70-56, while Xavier toppled San Beda, 51-44.

Kevin John Ong Lim of Xavier and Michael Jay Javelosa of Ateneo were adjudged most valuable players in the Passerelle and SBP divisions, respectively.

PBAP's Posadas tops Sletba tilt

APPLE POSADAS OF PBAP-BOWLMART notched back-to-back championship titles by topping the Open Masters division in the finals Sunday of the 11th Sletba Open at the Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall Bowling Center in Cainta, Rizal.

Posadas capped a sterling performance with a perfect 300 in the fourth game of the gruelling 16-game series for a 3682 total.

But she had to rely on luck in hurdling a tough challenge from Jeff Chan of TBAM-Prima-Powerbowl, who settled for second place with a 3669.

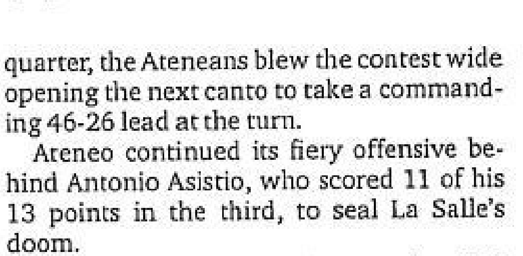
Posadas paced the field from the start, but saw her lead cut down to only 13 pinfalls after Chan's blazing run in games 13, 14 and 15.

Chan had a chance to wrest the championship in the final game but managed only a spare in the final frame for a score of 201 against Posadas' 202.

Raoul Miranda of MTBA wound up third with 3639.

The Graded Masters category finals proved to be a thriller, too, with Tobs Renacia of Sletba-Dau Long scoring a come-from-behind victory against Steve Robles of the Pasig Bowling Association (PBA).

Robles was a frame away from the championship and needed even a spare to win. But his roll resulted in a split and an open frame, enabling Renacia to snatch the win with a two-pinfall lead, 3110 against Robles' 3108. Danny Tuazon, also of PBA, was third with 3028 for the 14-game series.



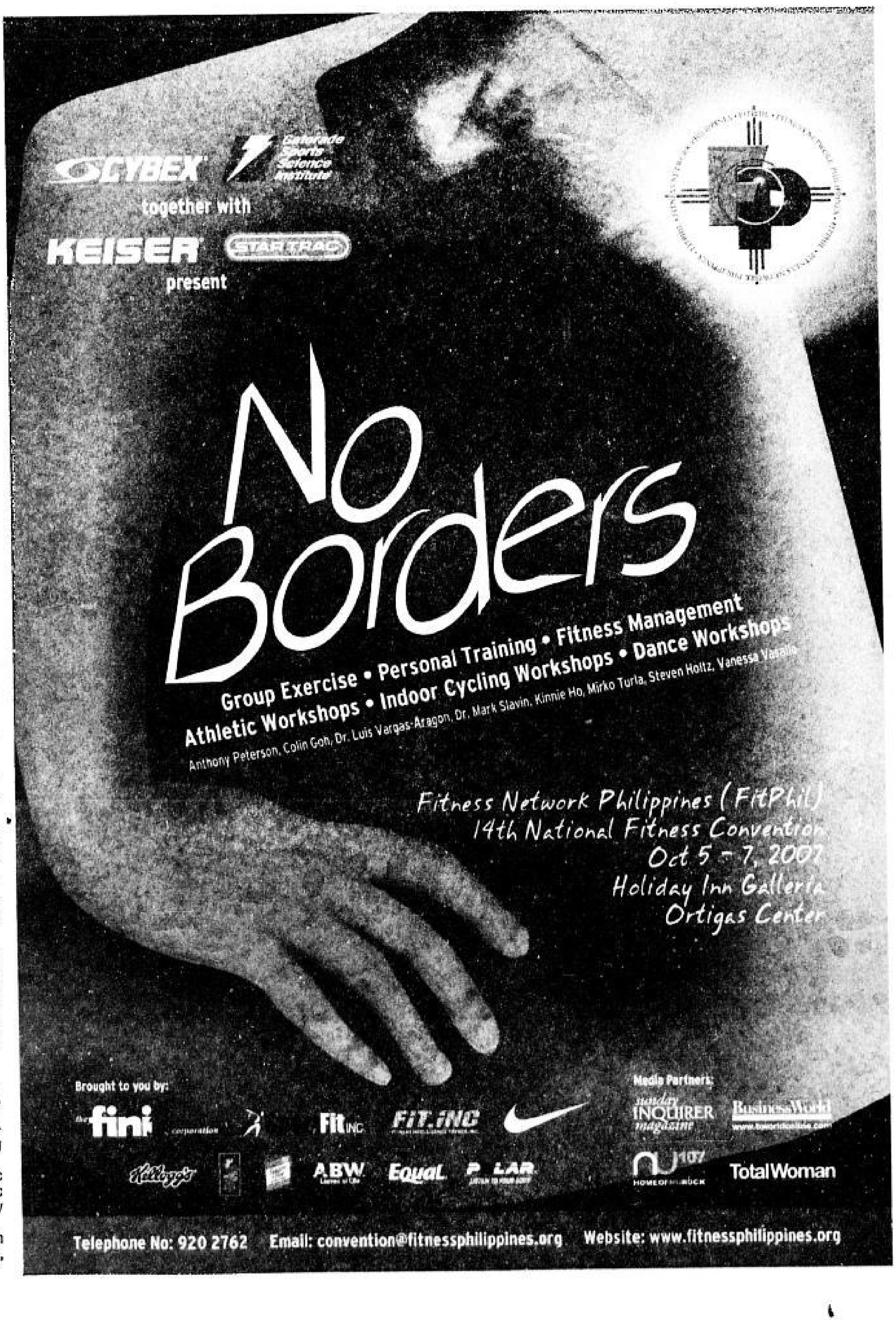
POSADAS: Perfect 300 for back-to-back champ

In the Ladies Masters event, it was a power show by the TBAM-Prima-Powerbowl players as they took the top three slots in last Saturday's finals. Krizziah Tabora topped the 12-game series with 2613, followed by Madeline Llamas with 2528, and Mades Arles, 2487.

Ceasar Muere of AMBA posted a score of 2554 in a 12-game series to notch the Associate Masters title, also held on Saturday. Bong Lacsamana of LCTBA was second with 2543, and Bryan Gabay of TBAM-Prima-Powerbowl third with 2473.

RACING BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Kat's Almighty (6), Piker's Magic (7), Red Gown/Kasiyahan (5), Rogue Knight (3)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Memory of Fire (2), Money Bank (6), Yes Sir I'm Yours (1), Devil in Disguise (5)
Race 3—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Magic Dancer (2), Hepburn (5), Dancing Slew (6), Sa Wakas (9), I Don't Dance (4)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Lady Cathy (4), Prince Geoffe (6), Kawiliwili (3), Lady Beware (8)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Friendly Fire (8), Silent Operator (1), Dato's Pride (9), Yao Man (12), Sol Invictus (7)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Look of Love (2), Infinite Passion (5), Look Who's Playing (1), Bird In Hand (7)
Race 7—(PentaQrt/Tri)—Modern Classic (2), Please Don't Stop (3), Classic Royale (8), Honest to Goodness (11), Advance Party (9)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Blue Iris (2), Happy Again (9), Shy Girl (7), Playing Cool (4), Beautiful Jaeda (8), Key Logger (11)



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RUNNERS, more than 5,000 of them, let off their first burst of speed as they answer the starting gun in the Cagayan de Oro 21K qualifying race of the 31st National Milo Marathon last Sunday. INQUIRER PHOTO/RAFFY LERMA

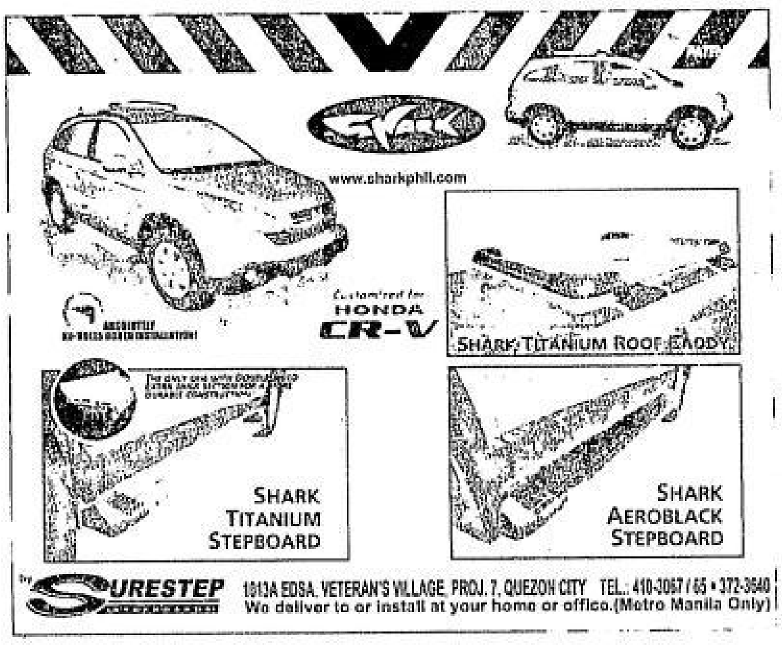
Acsat makes UCAA finals

ERIC SUGUITAN CANNED TWO free throws with 4.5 seconds left in overtime to carry the Asian College of Science and Technology to an 85-83 win over Las Piñas College and hand the Lightnings the first finals berth in the the sixth Universities and Colleges Athletic Association (UCAA) men's basketball at The Arena in San Juan.

The 6'7" Suguitan fished a foul from Sereno Cunial and sank the winning points while the Blue Lions failed to convert in the return play.

Acsat's best-of-three final foe would either be St. Francis or Emilio Aguinaldo College, which were still playing as of press time.

"The boys' character were put to a test," said Acsat coach Ricky Alcantara.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ORO MILO RUN QUALIFIER

Sawin-ay, Topia rule

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—VETERAN RUNner Roger Sawin-ay of Bukidnon and the upcoming Cecille Faith Topia of Pagadian City topped the 21-kilometer qualifying race of the 31st National Milo Marathon yesterday at the Don Gregorio Pelaez Sports Complex here.

Sawin-ay, who turned 33 last Saturday, survived a tough challenge from Leo Colonia and Joefe Dala before winning in one hour, 15 minutes and nine seconds.

Colonia finished nine seconds behind Sawin-Ay, with Dala another second further adrift.

Sawin-ay pocketed P10,000 for the win while Colonia and Dala settled for the P6,000 and P4,000 purses, respectively.

All three advanced to the Milo Marathon finals on Nov. 18 in Metro Manila along with the top three finishers in the women's race.

The 20-year-old Topia was virtually unchallenged in the distaff side of this foot race held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, adidas and the Department of Tourism.

She breasted the tape in 1:38:06 in nailing her second straight leg title here.

Angelie Pluma was second in 2:10:34 and Michelle Trani third in 2:17:01.

Unlike Sawin-ay, who said he needs a longer training in the finals, Topia is aiming for the national crown in November.

"My chances are good because the national athletes won't be in the finals," said Topia. "I'm determined to make it to the top three."

The national athletes, including defending women's national champion Jho-An Banayag, are expected to miss the Finals due to their stints in the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

The top three finishers in the 5K fun run were Jerry Natural, Patrick Gongob and Arnold Bacatayo in the men's division and Lalaine Patricio, Stephanie Pumatong and Revelyn Vaguchay in the distaff race.

The winners in the 3K race for kids were John Galia and Dencel Lanciola in the 6-9 age category and Jermy Clavecilla and Jaimie Tacling in the 10-12 age group.

Misamis Oriental General Comprehensive High School topped the team competition.

16th Intervillage golf under way today

GOLFERS FROM THE COUNTRY'S top villages converge today for the 16th Intervillage Golf Tournament Series at the Jack Nicklaus-signature course of Sherwood Hills Golf Club in Trece Martirez, Cavite.

"We are very proud to have made it this far," said said Intervillage organizer Vince Villafuerte, also the president of Videocom. "What inspires us to keep on going, year after year, is having everyone on board as our partners to celebrate golf, a game we all love."

This year's Intervillage will be made possible by My Phone, the newest line of cellular phone equipment being distributed by the Solid Group, after it has agreed to be the tournament presenter of the six-leg series.

" "Everybody is eager to get the event underway," added Villaruel, who sealed the deal with Solid Group COO Jason Lim.

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Peso seen firming up to 43:$1 by yearend

Touches 44 level to close at 44.85

By Doris C. Dumlao

FRENCH BANKING GIANT BNP PARIBAS IS very bullish on the peso, expecting the local currency to firm up at 43 to a dollar by year's end, zooming to 37 next year, and further to 30 or at par with the Thai baht by end-2009.

Yesterday, the peso closed at 44.85 from Friday's finish of 45.04 against the greenback.

"With a balance-of-payments (BOP) surplus at record levels and Philippine peso yields still offering a decent pick-up over declining US dollar yields, we rate the Philippine peso as one of our key picks for 2008," BNP Paribas said in its October outlook on Asian currencies.

BNP Paribas expects the local currency to finally catch up with the Thai baht, which is seen to end this year at 31.50 and then marginally rise to

PESO/ B5

Lecture/Rou
S es 20

DENR Secretary Lito Atienza answers queries during the Philippine Mining Industry lecture and Roundtable series 2007 at the Manila Golf Club, Forbes Park, Makati City. With Sec. Atienza is Chamber of Mines of the Philippines president Philip Romualdez (left). EUGENE ARANETA

Political will needed to boost RP competitiveness

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT needs to find more political will to improve the local business climate and consequently make the country more hospitable to foreign and local investors, according to business leaders.

At the same time, a unit of the World Bank recently unveiled the results of a competitiveness ranking survey which its officials hope would encourage authorities to persevere with reform measures meant to make the country more "business friendly."

In this year's edition of its "Doing Business" survey, International Finance Corp. (IFC) noted that the Philippines' ranking slipped to 133 in a field of 178 countries. This was slightly lower than the previous year's ranking of 130, and the rank of 121 from two years ago.

IFC officials dubbed the country as a "slow reformer" but expressed hopes that the survey would serve as a guide for the government on which aspects of the regulatory and business environment to focus on.

"We want to use this study as a tool," IFC acting country manager Jesse Ang said in an interview. "We want it to be used as a guide for the country's reform agenda."

He said the IFC's findings were also meant to help the private sector identify countries which are most business friendly, or—for existing companies—help assess the environment where they presently stand.

Indeed, beyond the country rankings, the survey also provides a detailed breakdown of aspects which businessmen and investors must contend with, how the Philippines ranks in terms of upholding the sanctity of contracts, the ease of hiring and firing employees, as well as the number of days it takes for a new business to secure all necessary regulatory permits.

"The [survey results are] aimed at both the public and private sectors," Ang said.

Asked about the country's steady decline in terms of business friendliness, Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II noted that the Philippines was not lacking in "grand plans" to reform the system, but needed to focus more on the small things that turn off businessmen.

Roxas knows whence he speaks, having headed the Department of Trade and Industry a few years ago, where he tried to clear out bottlenecks in the regulatory system.

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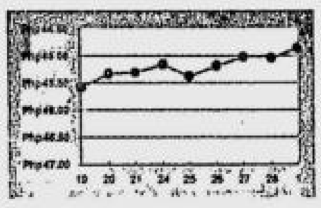
CURRENCIES



SEPTEMBER OCTOBER

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STOCK MARKET

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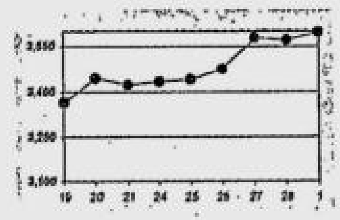
SEPTEMBER OCTOBER



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Stocks up on mining gains

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.70-percent higher yesterday as record gold prices and hopes of lower borrowing costs sent the stock market index to its best finish in nearly nine weeks, dealers said.

They said all sectors advanced, but miners outshone everything else on strong demand after gold prices hit fresh 28-year highs last Friday.

STOCKS/ B2

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Ron Nathan

A GERMAN FACTORY WORKER who stole over a million screws was eventually nailed. REUTERS.

This is a true story except for the last sentence. President PUTIN is very popular with an approval rating of more than 80 percent but under the Russian constitution, he cannot run more than twice in succession. So next year, when his term ends, he has appointed as his new Prime Minister, VICTOR SUBKOV. Apart from his age, 65, little is known about him. He was an obscure anti-money laundering official but is a relative of the President. So is the heath minister and the minister of defense is his son-in-law. As PUTIN is bald and SUBKOV has a full head of hair, he will be nominated as "the hair apparent," and will do whatever he is told. When high-ranking officials in the DUMA (Lower House) objected to the President perpetuating his dynasty, he said, "I will PUTIN whoever I please."

A gay who lived in Khartoum
Took a lesbian up to his room
And they argued all night
Over who had the right
To do what, and with which, and to whom.

Normally, September is a bad month for investment in the U.S. but this year, thanks to a half-point cut in the interest-rate by the FED, the index rose 4.1 percent. However, I do not expect this to continue. The unemployment number for August shocked everyone but they are notoriously unreliable and the figure is sure to be revised. I do not anticipate another negative number for September and I would not be surprised if it is up by 50,000, or more. If this is correct, it would mean that the U.S. economy is still healthy and another cut next month, expected by 86 percent of futures traders, would not occur.

Traders and investors will be confused. On the one hand, it is good news for companies and profits; on the other hand, it will put the FED on hold for fear of fanning inflation. Fear is greater than greed, so the market would probably fall on disappointment, especially as it is at such a high level, up 11 percent this year. BERNANKE will still feel that he made the right decision by cutting a half-point but he would probably be more cautious in the coming months.

Every time he cuts the rate, the dollar weakens and it is now 1.42 against the euro and 2.04 against the pound, the highest rate in 26 years. As a hedge against the ever-depreciating dollar, gold has risen to $750 an ounce, its highest since 1980, when it touched $850. Opec is none too happy, even though the oil price is at a new high, and it is believed that they are selling some of their dollars to buy the euro and gold.

The United States has recorded 20 successive quarters of double-digit growth, a highly credible performance. For the second quarter, before the subprime mortgage problem appeared, analysts' expected year-on-year growth to decline to 6.6 percent. They were too pessimistic because the actual figure was 11.1 percent. For the third quarter just ended, they are predicting an increase of only 2.7 percent. Assuming that they are again over-pessimistic, profits might increase by 6-7 percent but this would still be the first time in 5 years, that profits did not grow by 10-percent plus. The announcement season is just about to begin and over the next 3 weeks, most of the S&P 500 index companies will be reporting. The real worry will be when companies announce profits commencing in 2008.

Personally, I do not think that the United States will go into a recession. In the past, the economy and companies have always proved more resilient than expected. Growth next year will almost certainly decline to 2 percent or slightly less but I doubt that it will turn negative. If it does, there will be further rate cuts and you will be able to light your cigarettes with dollar bills. People with gold teeth will be unable to walk in the street for fear of being mugged.

Asian stocks advanced to new highs, led by mining giants, BHP and RTZ. BHP is believed to have discovered a very large deposit of gold and also benefits from the record price of crude oil. Commodity prices have been rising steadily and this continues to be an exciting sector. The Chinese CSI 300 index has more than quadrupled over the past year to a new peak and the People's Bank of China's research department has raised its forecast of annual growth from 10.8 percent in June to 11.6 percent in September. The Hong Kong market has been booming and the HANG SENG is over 27,000. In metals, zinc, copper and nickel have all improved in price.

The only country not measuring up to Asian standards is Japan, where the news is mixed. Industrial production increased at the fastest pace in 4 years and spending rose by 1.6 percent but consumer prices have declined for the 7th month in succession so they have mild deflation, which is not good. Disposable income is decreasing, and the middle class is shrinking (in contrast to China). Japan is important, as it is still the largest economy in Asia and second largest in the world.

Asian currencies have all been appreciating against the dollar especially the rupee, peso, Singapore dollar and the ringgit. With the peso at 45, I doubt that the central bank will cut by 50 basis points but might cut by 25 basis points on Thursday. The appreciation of the peso is causing havoc among call centers, who receive payment in dollars but whose expenses are mainly in pesos. Families receiving remittances are also about 18-percent worse off since 2006 when the rate was 55. It hurts exporters but keeps down inflation.

THE ZTE scandal dominated events in the Senate and I am abalos to understand how an honest politician like NERI, came to be in government. A census on corruption showed that the Philippines ranked 133rd, not a passing grade. As for the ease of doing business, Singapore came first and out of 98 countries, we came 97th. That merits an F.

My wife was asked if she was sexually active. "No", she said, "I just lie there."

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First Gen starts share buyback

POWER PRODUCER FIRST GENERATION Corp. said it started yesterday a program to buy back P2 billion worth of its own shares or 4 percent of the company's current market capital.

First Gen said in a disclosure to the stock exchange that the buyback program will be carried out over a two-year period or until Sept. 30, 2009, subject to any extension that may be determined by the firm's executive committee.

First Gen said it would undertake a buyback transaction only if the price per share is deemed "extremely undervalued," or when share prices are considered highly volatile or if the company believes that a buy back will result in enhancing shareholder value.

First Gen was up yesterday by P2.50 or 3.9 percent to P66 a share.

The company earlier disclosed that it would increase its capital stock to P3.65 billion from P1.65 billion through the creation of 200 million preferred shares with a par of P10 apiece.

First Gen also declared its intention to bid for the government's 40-percent stake in PNOC Energy Development Corp (PNOC-EDC) that is up for sale.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

Stocks up on mining gains

From page B1

The composite index added 25.02 points to 3,597.92, off a high of 3,606.72. A total of 3.2 billion shares worth P4.1 billion were traded. Gainers overwhelmed decliners 84 to 23, 53 stocks were steady.

It was the main index's highest close since July 26, when it settled at 3,659.68. The broader all-share index rose 17.46 points to 2,244.17.

Major property developers were also in favor on hopes of a cut in key local interest rates when the central bank holds its policy-setting meeting Thursday and on the bullish outlook for the sector.

"Investors have seen buying opportunities in mining stocks because of rising commodity prices," said Jonathan Ravelas of Banco de Oro.

"But they are likely to continue a wait-and-see stance, especially since the third-quarter earnings reporting season is around the corner," he added.

"I don't expect investors to move decisively until after the Oct. 4 meeting of the central bank," Ravelas said.

But Gomer Tan of Regina Capital Development Corp. said with or without a rate cut, property stocks are unlikely to lose their appeal given their attractive valuations relative to the sector's profit potential.

He cited in particular the steady flow of remittances from overseas-based Filipinos, amounting to at least a billion dollars every month, which are used to buy new homes.

"While there is some buying interest today, clearly there's resistance at the 3,600-point level and volumes are thin," said Harry Liu of Summit Securities.

Philex Mining, the country's biggest and most profitable miner, rose 30 centavos to P8.

Petron was up 20 centavos to P5.90. Megaworld surged 40 centavos to P3.85, while rival Ayala Land added 25 centavos to P16.50.

AFP

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of October 1, 2007)

52-WKS HIGH	52-WKS LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	5.5	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.8	9	8.8	9	73,000
73	39	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc	59	59.5	58.5	59.5	434,200
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	66	66.5	65.5	66.5	2,954,300
748	504	China Banking Corp.	700	700	690	700	10,070
23.5	18.5	Citystate Savings Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.42	0.44	0.42	0.43	990,000
75.5	40	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	56.5	57	55.5	56	7,491,800
65.5	33	Philippine National Bank	47.5	48.5	47.5	48.5	421,100
68	41	Philippine Savings Bank	61	62.5	61	62.5	2,200
39.57	15	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	23.5	26.5	23.5	26	4,332,800
90	49.5	Security Bank Corp.	75.5	75.5	75.5	75.5	1,800
66	43.52	Union Bank of the Philippines	55	55	54	54	[illegible]
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
2.72	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.92	1.96	1.9	1.96	[illegible]
16.25	3.7	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	11.5	12	11.5	12	265,600
8.8	4.6	Filipino Fund Inc.	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.1	2,000
1.6	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	900,000
5	2.95	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.6	3.75	3.6	3.75	4,589,000
3.1	1.02	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	137,000
1,005.00	232	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	770	770	760	770	1,200
2,335.00	1,945.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,300.00	2,330.00	2,300.00	2,330.00	250
1.94	1.3	Vantage Corp.	1.52	1.56	1.52	1.56	[illegible]
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	621,000
0.57	0.23	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	630,000
70	49	First Gen Corp.	63.5	66	63.5	66	113,300
92	50	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	78	79	78	78.5	148,300
15	8.8	Manila Water Company Inc.	14	15	14	14.75	6,858,900
105.45	17.27	Manila Electric Company	82.5	84	82	83.5	1,109,300
7	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.4	6.6	6.3	6.6	25,863,000
6.5	3.9	Petron Corp.	5.7	5.9	5.7	5.9	3,932,000
14.75	6.6	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7.2	7.6	7.2	7.5	45,000
1.9	0.99	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.24	1.3	1.24	1.28	1,440,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.2	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	8,000
2.95	1.66	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.76	1.78	532,000
26.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.5	24.5	24.5	24.5	12,000
61	34	Jollibee Foods Corp.	52.5	53	52.5	53	343,500
9	4.95	Pancake House Inc.	8.4	8.4	8	8	3,000
0.98	0.43	RFM Corp.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	10,000
3.85	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	120,000
80	59	San Miguel Corp. A	62	63	61.5	62	319,300
88	59.5	San Miguel Corp. B	63	65	63	64	177,200
0.66	0.25	Swift Foods Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	200,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	16.25	16.5	16	16.25	1,456,900
0.55	0.26	Vitarich Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	[illegible]
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	1.83	EEI Corp.	4.35	4.6	4.35	4.6	533,000
21.5	6	Federal Chemicals Inc.	6.1	7.1	6.1	7.1	47,000
9.2	4.9	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.2	8.4	8.2	8.3	10,473,000
7	1.44	Republic Cement Corp.	4	4	4	4	30,000
2	0.78	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1.22	1.3	1.22	1.28	[illegible]
		CHEMICALS					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
7.4	5.1	Panasonic Manufacturing Phils. Corp.	6.9	7	6.9	7	[illegible]
0.75	0.125	Picop Resources Inc.	0.41	0.42	0.4	0.42	16,500,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	2.06	A. Soriano Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	81,000
0.17	0.025	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.1	0.105	3,850,000
1.28	0.22	APC Group Inc.	0.85	0.89	0.83	0.87	22,290,000
0.018	0.007	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	77,600,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	26,700,000
9.7	5.1	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	7	7.2	7	7.2	34,000
0.021	0.0075	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.015	0.016	0.015	0.016	195,800,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.2	5.5	5.2	5.4	10,803,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.32	2.38	2.3	2.36	2,322,000
590	375	Ayala Corp.	550	555	545	550	131,220
5.8	1.22	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4.15	4.25	4.15	4.25	8,120,000
10.25	3.75	DMCI Holdings Inc.	9.1	9.3	9.1	9.3	869,000
6.9	1.08	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	4	4	4	4	1,000
2.5	0.7	F and J Prince Holdings Corp. A	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	50,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.4	5.7	5.4	5.7	4,655,000
3.55	1.26	House of Investments Inc.	1.92	2	1.92	2	190,000
14.5	6	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	515,400
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.82	1.9	1.8	1.9	455,000
11.5	1.1	Multitech Investments Corp.	6.3	6.6	6.3	6.4	7,433,000
8.2	2.8	PAL Holdings Inc.	7.1	7.3	7.1	7.2	448,000
0.215	0.01	Pacifica Inc. A	0.19	0.195	0.18	0.185	111,790,000
0.75	0.18	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.47	0.49	0.47	0.49	6,940,000
452.5	237.84	SM Investments Corp.	370	370	367.5	367.5	41,530
0.73	0.125	Sinophil Corp.	0.41	0.44	0.41	0.42	22,780,000
1.06	0.6	Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	320,000
1.6	0.9	South China Resources Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.42	1.46	66,000
23	1	TKC Steel Corp.	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	9,100
0.75	0.1	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.38	0.4	12,560,000
1.1	0.26	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	0.96	A Brown Company Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	68,000
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.9	15,000
1.06	0.32	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.73	0.8	0.73	0.8	1,230,000
19.25	11.25	Ayala Land Inc.	16.25	16.75	16	16.5	12,796,900
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.26	2,729,000
4.7	2.65	Cebu Holdings Inc.	4	4.3	4	4.2	1,120,000
2.9	1.3	Cityland Development Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2,000
0.86	0.31	Crown Equities Inc.	0.63	0.64	0.63	0.64	1,840,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.49	0.52	0.49	0.52	4,120,000
0.99	0.52	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.71	0.79	0.7	0.77	33,890,000
0.47	0.05	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	7,670,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.24	1.36	1.22	1.3	64,335,000
2.44	1.26	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.76	1.8	1.7	1.74	74,553,000
0.49	0.1	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	220,000
2.9	0.95	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	53,000
1.12	0.24	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.59	0.63	0.58	0.61	7,770,000
4.4	1.73	Megaworld Corp.	3.45	3.9	3.45	3.85	75,738,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	3.9	4.2	3.9	4.2	986,000
0.7	0.125	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.39	2,680,000
0.87	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.53	0.5	0.53	4,270,000
23	12.5	Robinson Land Corp.	16.5	17.25	16.5	17.25	10,772,300
5.9	1.52	SM Development Corp.	4.3	4.45	4.3	4.45	924,000
13.5	6.64	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.5	2,204,800
3.25	1.02	Shang Properties Inc.	2.34	2.42	2.34	2.36	386,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.67	0.72	0.67	0.69	4,990,000
0.49	0.08	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1,830,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	5.1	5.1	4.9	5.1	[illegible]
		MEDIA					
38.5	16.25	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31.5	32.5	31.5	32.5	223,100
11.75	8.7	GMA Network Inc.	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	[illegible]
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.36	1.4	1.34	1.4	[illegible]
1,520.00	1,055.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,470.00	1,470.00	1,460.00	1,460.00	172,310
2,950.00	2,150.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,900.00	2,910.00	2,900.00	2,905.00	54,690
7.9	4.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7	7.2	7	7.2	1,074,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.205	0.19	0.2	20,950,000
11.5	2	IPVG Corp.	8.3	8.9	8.3	8.8	3,756,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.048	0.048	0.042	0.043	285,200,000
2.9	1.48	Ionics Inc.	1.72	1.78	1.72	1.78	205,000
0.32	0.043	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.185	0.195	0.185	0.185	24,690,000
2.08	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.28	1.28	180,000
0.0725	0.029	PhilWeb.Com Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	153,800,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.55	2.6	2.5	2.55	[illegible]
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.36	1.42	1.36	1.42	[illegible]
6.8	3.5	Asian Terminals Inc.	3.95	3.95	3.9	3.9	126,000
38.5	16.5	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	36.5	37	36.5	37	854,000
2.16	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	2	2	2	2	20,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.95	3.15	2.95	3.15	565,000
6	2.16	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	24,000
0.98	0.3	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.69	0.74	0.68	0.68	17,780,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.81	0.87	0.81	0.87	[illegible]
		EDUCATION					
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
6	1.94	Macroasia Corp.	4.65	4.7	4.6	4.7	[illegible]
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	13	13	12.75	13	203,500
30	10.75	[illegible]	12.5	13	12.5	13	[illegible]
		MINING					
0.017	[illegible]	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	[illegible]
7.6	3.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	201,000
7.7	3.85	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	136,000
21.25	7.7	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	15.75	16.25	15.75	16	4,974,700
14.25	8.9	Benguet Corp. A	12	12	12	12	27,500
5	1.8	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	10,000
3.1	0.51	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.55	122,182,000
0.37	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	40,240,000
0.42	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.37	0.39	0.37	0.38	29,840,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.028	86,700,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	20,000,000
30	1.2	NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	20	20.75	20	20.25	1,812,300
0.021	0.0079	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	92,700,000
8.1	3.45	Philex Mining Corp.	7.9	8.1	7.8	8	23,205,000
43	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	34.5	35	34.5	35	26,600
1.36	0.39	United Paragon Mining Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	525,000
1.8	0.56	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.26	1.32	1.26	1.3	[illegible]
		OIL					
0.56	0.25	Basic Energy Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.35	[illegible]
0.026	0.0095	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	103,000,000
0.027	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	159,900,000
11.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	9.8	9.9	9.8	9.9	33,000
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	503,400,000

AVERAGES				VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	914.96	UP	6.44	26,925,620	850,762,765.00
Industrial	4,647.70	UP	74.96	91,513,800	610,335,320.00
Holding Firms	2,038.65	UP	5.61	516,855,150	340,442,285.00
Property	1,649.79	UP	37.08	317,501,000	973,716,990.00
Service	1,741.03	UP	0.54	517,722,700	586,975,875.00
Mining & Oil	7,581.94	UP	209.84	1,710,578,100	674,456,210.00
All Shares Index	2,244.17	UP	17.46		
PSEi	3,597.92	UP	25.02		
		GRAND TOTALS		3,181,096,370	4,036,689,445.00

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

CURRENCIES

October 1, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.701115	1.000000	44.9740
Japan	Yen	0.006109	0.008713	0.3919
United Kingdom	Pound	1.435252	2.047100	92.0663
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.090285	0.128773	5.7914
Switzerland	Franc	0.602281	0.859033	38.6342
Canada	Dollar	0.705276	1.005935	45.2409
Singapore	Dollar	0.472163	0.673446	30.2876
Australia	Dollar	0.621170	0.885975	39.8458
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.860708	2.653928	119.3578
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.187514	0.267451	12.0283
Brunei	Dollar	0.470578	0.671186	30.1859
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000076	0.000109	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.022048	0.031447	1.4143
UAE	Dirham	0.190987	0.272405	12.2511
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.426300	64.1464
Korea	Won	0.000766	0.001093	0.0492
China	Yuan**	0.093298	0.133071	5.9847
Denmark	Kroner	0.134177	0.191377	8.6070
India	Rupee	0.017683	0.025221	1.1343
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.205908	0.293686	13.2082
New Zealand	Dollar	0.530585	0.756773	34.0351
Sweden	Kroner	0.108913	0.155342	6.9864
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021487	0.030647	1.3783

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Sept. 28, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of Sept. 28, 2007

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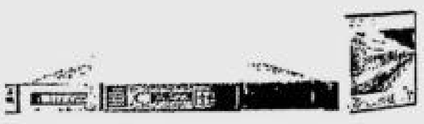

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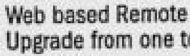

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RP reopens air talks with Singapore, N. Zealand

3rd-country code sharing remains a sticky issue

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE COUNTRY'S AIR PANEL IS gearing up for a new round of air rights negotiations with Singapore and New Zealand within the month.

The Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) said among the topics to be discussed were the regular Singapore-Clark and Auckland-Clark passenger flights.

CAB Deputy Director Porvenir Porciuncula said that, during the talks to be held in the city-state, the Philippines air panel would ask Singapore to regularize flights to and from Clark. This way, both the local airlines and Singapore carriers, can serve the Singapore-Clark route.

He said this would give air travelers more choices and the airlines more competition.

As for the negotiations with New Zealand, the sticky issue is the NZ government's proposal for a third-country code sharing.

"The Philippines has no problem with code sharing, as long as it is bilateral. We don't want third-country rights thrown in," Porciuncula told the INQUIRER.

"But it is a basic issue, (and) we are willing to sort it out, after all it is our first ASA with New Zealand."

The highlights of the emerging ASA include a grant of reciprocal rights to New Zealand and Philippine carriers to operate passenger and cargo flights at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark.

Earlier, Porciuncula and other members of the air panel said the two governments made considerable progress during the negotiations on Sept. 6-7 at the New Zealand Ministry of Transport headquarters in Wellington, New Zealand.

The details of the next meeting have yet to be set.

The Philippine air panel is composed of representatives from the CAB, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Tourism, Department of Foreign Affairs, and domestic airlines.

Metrobank's ₱5-B bond offering gets Baa3 rating

By Doris C. Dumlao

GLOBAL CREDIT WATCHDOG Moody's Investor Service yesterday assigned an investment grade rating of Baa3 to Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.'s P5-billion 10-year bond offering.

Moody's rating scale runs from a high of Aaa to a low of C, consisting of 21 notches. The scale is divided into two sections—investment grade and speculative grade. The lowest investment grade rating is Baa3.

"Moody's ratings for Metrobank reflect the bank's dominant size, established brand name and healthy financial fundamentals. Also, the ratings are based on Moody's assessment that the systemic support probability for Metrobank is very high," the credit rating firm said in a statement.

Metrobank said it had begun its offering of tier 2 subordinated peso notes yesterday. The bond offering qualified as tier 2 or supplementary capital.

"The purpose of the offer is to increase and strengthen the bank's capital base," the bank said.

Million-peso question about PLDT

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THE CROWD AT THE SENATE HEARING on the contract between China's ZTE and the DOTC has become thinner than my pate.

Last Thursday, only a handful of senators took part in it, perhaps because the topic was the technical issue on the national broadband network (NBN) project.

In between yawns, I gathered from the testimonies of UP Economics professors Emmanuel De Dios (the current dean) and Raul Fabella (former dean) that this country really has no need for the project.

For one, we already have broadband networks operated by the gigantic PLDT and by this little known outfit called TelecPhil. That is a network operated by a consortium of other telecom companies.

The academicians opined that, instead of building the NBN, the government should just tap the existing backbones of these private firms.

Enter Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, who asked such an innocent question that the UP guys simply evaded it. Enrile wanted to know whether or not the UP School of Economics has any involvement or connection whatsoever with any of those private firms.

After hemming and hewing, the professors admitted they were doing a paper for the Center for National Policy and Strategy. The center of course gets funding from—what else—none other than PLDT. The study costs about P1 million. No wonder!

***

Anyway, now that former Neda Secretary General Romulo Neri testified that the *Lola* at the Palace, plus First Gentleman Miguel Arroyo, did not have any involvement in the alleged irregularities in the ZTE deal, perhaps he should also point out who among the Cabinet members were involved.

Come on, Neri said he was offered a P200-million bribe!

And mind you, the Cabinet approved the project.

The multimillion-peso question is this: Who got the money then?

***

The first Filipino brand of mobile telephone is selling like... well, any other brand of mobile telephone, albeit foreign ones. Meaning, the public is snatching it up—i.e. it is hot!

The Filipino phone is called simply as "myphone," the brainchild of David Lim, president and CEO of publicly listed Solid Group.

Actually, the "myphone" line of mobile gadgets is made in the Lim family's electronics factories in China, where David's father, Joseph Lim, has parlayed the family's electronics business into the second biggest mobile telephone maker in China, under the brand name "Amoy."

In its Chinese character, "Amoy" has a good connotation, but here in the Philippines, the anglicized term can be interpreted as "body odor."

And so David Lim simply changed the brand name for the Philippines, and luckily for Solid Group, the initial shipment did not last long at the store shelves.

Now, the phone's come-on may be its capability to operate two SIM cards at the same time, which is nothing new in the fast-changing mobile technology.

Similar Chinese-brand dual-sim card mobile telephones have been available in Greenhills (San Juan) for a long time, although the public has not really raved for them.

What makes "myphone" any different then? It is the back-up service, according to David Lim, which the Solid Group's service centers nationwide is providing.

And that's it? Methinks that the idea of having dual SIM tickles the Filipino psyche. You know—the double life of the Filipino man, for instance.

Don't get me wrong. I am not referring to those with two or even multiple families. I mean, really, we have as an example MMDA Administrator Bayani Fernando, who is the metropolis' big boss by day, and a singer by night.

***

One hot topic in the oil and gas industry these days, and perhaps even in the stock market, is the Galoc field in Palawan.

It seems that, with the high prices of oil, the Galoc field is being reactivated.

Based on the public statement of its operator, Galoc Production Co., the field is supposed to have reserves of 10 million barrels of oil.

One the major partners in the Galoc field, Nido Petroleum, is saying that the reserves should be around 23 million barrels.

That, mind you, is more than twice the figure quoted by the operator itself!

Okay, in the oil exploration business, like economic forecasts, no two estimates of reserves can never be the same.

But surely the difference cannot be as much as 100 percent?

Something must be afoot. Are the estimates being inflated to affect the stock market? Or are the estimates being deflated to cut the payment of royalty to the government?

Calling the Department of Energy. Really, we are getting confused!

***

Early this year, the Department of Education (DepEd) conducted the national career assessment examination or the NCAE for the first time.

Some 1.4 million fourth-year high school students in more than 10,000 public and private high schools took it.

Surprise—the results showed that more than half of the graduating high school students were fit for careers other than those needing four-year college degrees!

That's about 700,000 students garnering high aptitude for so-called technical-vocational programs.

In business, those human resources people surely would have given anything for those students to have gone to technical training instead of, say, taking up AB, after which the students could not even find jobs as waiters.

After all, the DepEd's idea behind the NCAE was for parents to look into career options for their kids, basing them on the kids' skills.

The NCAE for school year 2007-2008 was administered last Aug. 28 for some 1.3 million students. The results are expected in November this year. Hopefully, more kids will enroll in technical schools next year. I am not sure, though.

Congress urged to remove hybrid rice subsidy

By Amy R. Remo

A COALITION OF NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS has urged Congress to stop the inclusion of hybrid rice subsidy in the Department of Agriculture's 2008 budget.

In a statement, the Rice Watch and Action Network (R1) said it was instead pushing for an increase of P158 million in the budget of Philippine Rice Research Institute to support organic farming, in light of increasing concern on agriculture's contribution to global warming.

"Congress should stand by its position in last year's budget hearing that this year would be the last for hybrid rice subsidy," Jessica Reyes-Cantos, R1 lead convenor, said in a statement.

In the recent budget hearing on agriculture, however, Ginintuang Masaganang Ani rice director Frisco Malabanan reported that the government's subsidy for each bag of 20 kilos of hybrid seeds is P1,000, R1 said.

"Assuming that a hectare of rice land will need 1 bag of hybrid rice seeds, the government will have to spend P500 million for hybrid rice subsidy covering 500,000 hectares or only 12.5 percent of the total rice lands," Cantos said.

Cantos cited the 2007 World Bank report on the public expenditures of the Department of Agriculture, which found the "sizeable amount of money and public human resources spent on Hybrid Rice Commercialization Program did not produce much net social benefit."

According to R1, the farmers' adoption of hybrid seeds has been slow, reaching peak coverage of 11 percent of total rice area in 2005.

In the meantime, R1 is pushing organic farming for a more sustainable agriculture and rice farming practices.

"Before everybody in the world condemns agriculture, organic farming may have the potential to reverse these trends and reduce carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and methane emissions," said Cantos.

The World Food Summit reported that chemical farming, together with deforestation, is responsible for the 30 percent of carbon dioxide emissions and 90 percent of nitrous oxide emissions worldwide.

Cantos said lodging it under the Philrice budget would facilitate easier and more transparent monitoring of expenses rather than integrating in the bulk money of the DA.

PAGADIAN AIRPORT

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo with (left) Alfredo Yao and Avelino Zapanta of Seair during the airline's inaugural flight from Cebu to Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur. JESS YUSON

Seair expands operations, starts Cebu-Pagadian service

By Tarra Quismundo

PAGADIAN CITY—EXPANDING ITS ROUTE network beyond just leisure destinations, domestic carrier Southeast Asian Airlines (Seair) has launched its Cebu City-Pagadian City service, bridging Visayas' premier city and Mindanao's emerging regional hub.

Seair's 32-seater Dornier 328 touched down for the first time at the Pagadian City airport in the morning of Sept. 17, landing on an airstrip in the middle of rice fields and grasslands.

The maiden flight was completed just an hour before President Macapagal-Arroyo and an entourage of cabinet members arrived in the city on board a Learjet for various activities around Zamboanga del Sur.

Seair president Avelino Zapanta said this was the company's contribution to the development of Mindanao.

Zapata said the Cebu-Pagadian flight was part of Seair's corporate social responsibility program, which also covered its Zamboanga City-Jolo and Zamboanga City-Tawi-Tawi services.

Becoming the only airline operating the route, Seair will go on flights from Cebu to Pagadian and back on Mondays and Thursdays, Zapanta said. The airline is offering one-way flights for about P3,000.

Those coming from Manila may first take the hour-long flight to Cebu before catching a connecting flight to Pagadian.

"There is much to bridge. There are the cultural differences... and economic access, between main capitals like Manila and Cebu and communities like Pagadian," Zapanta said.

The new route aims to serve a clientele of employees working in Pagadian-based regional offices of government agencies and natives commuting from the city to Luzon and Visayas.

"It would be very helpful to the city of Pagadian since we are now the center of Region 9 and this is the clamor of [employees] of regional offices. They don't have easy access to big cities like Cebu and Manila where they have to report from time to time," said Pagadian City Mayor Samuel Co.

The flights will also support Pagadian's aim of uplifting the region's tourist industry by next year said Co, as the city has been developing its tourist destinations.

The province has also been working to upgrade its airport—from improving its modest terminal to repaving the runway to accommodate larger aircraft—to entice more travelers to visit the province.

The Cebu-Pagadian-Cebu route is Seair's 15th destination, an addition to a list that includes prime tourist destinations such as Caticlan (Boracay), Busuanga and El Nido in Palawan, Camiguin, and its home base, the Clark Special Economic Zone.

Power firms can give 'special rates,' says ERC

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION is allowing power firms to offer "preferential rates" to their customers even without prior consent from the regulator.

In a Sept. 19 order, the regulatory body said it had, in previous decisions, said "the grant of preferential rates to qualified consumers should be considered as a business decision."

While giving power firms this freedom, the ERC said certain conditions should be met when offering special rates.

The order stated that any revenue reduction on the part of distribution utilities, National Power Corp. and National Transmission Corp. as a result of providing preferential rates to their customers should not be recovered from or passed on to other clients.

Also, any losses that might be incurred by these power companies should not result in any form of cross-subsidy.

When giving preferential rates to a certain group of customers, the ERC said power firms should treat all similarly situated customers in the same way and give them the same privilege.

To ensure that this order would not result in any rate irregularities, the ERC has ordered Napocor, Transco and all distribution utilities to submit lists of customers that will be getting preferential rates.

These submissions would be done twice a year—on Jan. 15 and July 15—according to the order.

Power users in 10 industrial estates and three economic zones within the Manila Electric Co. franchise will soon be treated to lower power rates, following the issuance of this particular ERC order, as well as a letter from ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. to immediately implement special rates for these areas.

Albano said that even if Meralco and Napocor had yet to formally file with the regulatory body their agreement on preferential rates, they could already implement these.

From as much as almost P5 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) in the past months, ecozone locators will enjoy a generation rate of only P3.52 per kWh, under the Meralco-Napocor agreement.

Napocor will provide up to 2,500 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of power at this low rate each year.

"If Meralco wants more, then we're more than willing to sit down with them again. The volume starts from 1,900 GWh to a maximum of 2,500 GWh," Napocor president Cyril Del Callar had earlier said.

Francisco said the special ecozone rate could even go down to P3.49 per kWh and to P3.46 per kWh, if the demand volume goes up to a certain level.

BIR out to drastically cut ₱4.5B in receivables

Authorities want to slash arrears by P500M a year

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE plans to slash its accounts receivables from back taxes by at least P500 million each year as part of reforms to strengthen tax administration.

Based on official statistics, the BIR's arrears amounted as of end-August to P4.5 billion. This amount does not include those from the estate of former President Ferdinand Marcos, the unpaid taxes of which were earlier assessed to be as high as P42 billion.

Under the national support for tax administration (NPSTAR) reform program funded by the World Bank, the BIR has committed to reduce the account receivables and increase revenue by developing a better accounts receivables management system.

The BIR reported to the Department of Finance that the plan to annually cut P500 million in receivables—including protested assessments—would lead to a significant reduction of current arrears by 2010.

As to the Marcos estate, a task force was earlier created to reassess the unpaid arrears. BIR officials said the amount was still large. But it was not as much as the P42 billion assessment during the term of BIR Commissioner Jose Buñag.

A successful collection of the estate tax from the Marcoses is expected to boost revenue collection this year, making up for the shortfalls in the first semester tax take.

In 1991, the BIR issued the Marcos family the following tax assessments: Estate tax worth P23.3 billion, as well as deficiency in income tax against the former president and his wife Imelda Marcos worth P184.15 million for the tax years 1986-1987.

Two years later, the BIR sent notices of levy on real property owned by the Marcoses. Some lots were placed under auction, but the properties failed to attract bidders and thus reverted to the government.

Aside from raising money from the privatization of government assets,' the DOF is pursuing nontraditional initiatives to raise additional revenue this year.

The NPSTAR project aims to assist the BIR in increasing taxpayer compliance by improving efficiency and effectiveness, and enhancing its capacity to undertake sustainable and long-term tax administration reform program.

Nido to undertake huge seismic program off Palawan

By Abigail L. Ho

AHEAD OF DRILLING activities at its Galoc service contract, Australia's Nido Petroleum Ltd. will undertake its biggest seismic acquisition program ever, starting with Service Contract 54 off Northwest Palawan.

In a disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange, Nido managing director David Whitby said the seismic data gathering program would involve a total of 5,000 line kilometers of 2D, and 846 square kilometers of 3D seismic data—"the largest ever undertaken in the history of the company."

The program would span service contracts 54, 58 and 63, all within the Northwest Palawan area, he said, and would utilize the services of CGGVeritas seismic vessels MV Pacific Titan and MV Pacific Sword.

For SC 54, he said the MV Pacific Titan would extend the 640-square-kilometer Abukay 3D seismic survey by another 165 square kilometers "to ensure full coverage of the Princesa Lead and the late Miocene Pag-Asa turbidite play fairway."

For SC 58, Whitby said Nido and joint venture partner PNOC Exploration Corp. would use the MV Pacific Titan to gather 661 square kilometers of 3D seismic over four areas.

The SC 58 2D and 3D seismic program will start late this month and will last until next January.

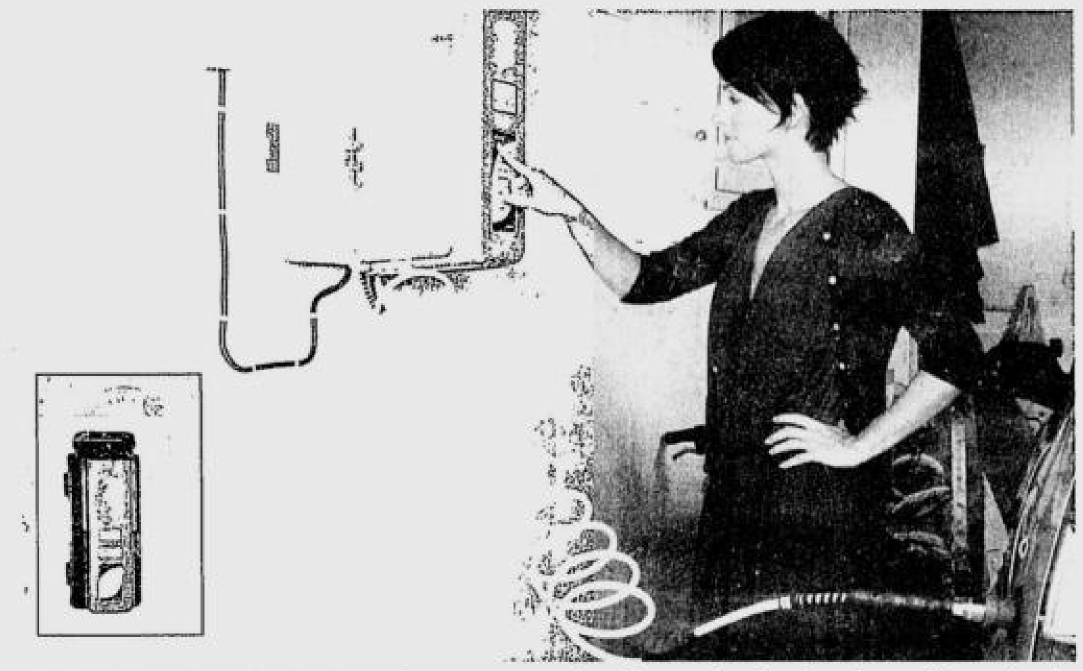
In France, mini fuel pumps soon to adorn homes

By Corrie Salientes-Narisma

WANT TO GAS UP AT HOME with your very own mini refueling station?

This may not be such a far-fetched idea anymore. Some countries have started to adopt this technology in support of efforts to encourage people to shift to natural gas-fed vehicles for cleaner environment.

Showcased in an exhibit during the 2007 Gas Conference in Paris held last month were a mini home compressed natural gas refueling station—only about double the size of a residential circuit breaker—and a prototype of a compressed natural gas-fed Toyota Prius II. Both were innovations of Gaz de France, a major player in Europe's natural gas sector.



A MODEL shows how the mini natural gas pump works. About twice the size of an ordinary circuit breaker at home (inset), the pump may yet become a permanent fixture in garages across France.

Gaz de France's mini home refueling station was born out of necessity. France, like several other European countries, has decided to go full blast in the promotion of natural gas use not only for power generation but also for transport fuel.

Commitments

But unlike Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Austria, France does not have a chain of public pump stations for natural gas, although oil companies and distributors committed to install at least 300 natural gas filling stations between now and 2010.

THE TOYOTA Prius—refitted to run on natural gas

This plan formed part of the undertaking entered into in 2005 by members of the French Association for Natural Gas Vehicles. Under the agreement, vehicle manufacturers will develop four-seater car models. The government will then provide a permanent tax incentive system, while Gaz de France will establish conditions that will lead to the adoption of a home refueling system.

In line with this commitment, Gaz de France started offering home natural gas packages, but only to customers whose houses were connected to existing natural gas network. The mini gas refueling unit is not even for sale. It is leased to customers by the company.

Practical, easy to use

The mini station—which compresses the gas to 200 bar, equivalent to the pressure of air in a scuba diver's air cylinder—may be installed by trained personnel in a private garage, garden or driveway. It is checked regularly by technicians, and is guaranteed by Gaz de France.

Once the unit is set up, fixed to a wall and connected to the gas network, all the customer needs to do is to connect the loading nozzle to the car and press the "on" button. It automatically stops operating when the tank is full. A 50-km drive will need about three hours of refueling.

A customer pays a basic monthly charge of 29 euro for the equipment and home refueling service, plus the cost of the gas consumed. Under the Gaz de France package, natural gas fuel costs 0.58 euro per cubic meter, equivalent to a liter of 98 octane super gasoline. This, according to the company, is about 50 percent less than the price of gasoline and 40 percent lower than that of diesel.

Perks

While vehicle makers, gas distributors and energy companies in France provide all the necessary tools that will encourage people to shift to natural gas as transport fuel, the French government sweetens the package and throws in tax incentives both to individual and corporate users.

A 2,000-euro tax credit is given to an individual user at the time of the original purchase of natural gas-powered vehicle. The amount goes up to 3,000 euros if the purchase of the natural gas-fed car is accompanied by the destruction (by an authorized agency) of a petrol-based private car registered before Jan. 1, 1997 and acquired at least 12 months prior to the date of destruction.

Companies shifting to vehicles operating solely or partially on natural gas get tax exemption on the purchase of the units and are allowed a 100-percent recovery of value-added tax on fuels.

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Peso seen firming up to 43:$1 ...

From page B1

30.50 by next year and settle at 30:$1 by end-2009.

"In countries where growth is weakening and confidence poor—such as Thailand—more (interest) rate cuts are expected. We expect the Thai baht to underperform too, as weaker growth, lower rates and an expensive currency favor other Asian currency plays," BNP Paribas said.

The peso and the baht traded closely against the US dollar before the Asian currency turmoil of 1997. But while Thailand was the epicenter of the currency turmoil that triggered a region-wide capital flight, the peso has lagged the baht since then.

BNP Paribas' forecast is a sustained uptrend for the peso closer to the pre-Asian crisis levels. Prior to the sharp currency devaluations since 1997, the peso traded at the 26:$1 level.

The commentary, written by BNP Paribas analyst Chin Loo Thio, recommended that investors stay "long" or buy into most Asian currencies including the peso throughout this year and next year.

Aside from the peso, BNP Paribas' other top currency picks for the next two years were the Malaysian ringgit, Singapore dollar, Chinese yuan and the Indonesian rupiah.

"The continued rapid pace of foreign exchange reserve accumulation—with the exception of countries such as Taiwan and Indonesia which deserve closer monitoring—is encouraging at a time when there are fears of foreign capital repatriation from emerging markets," the research said.

"Indeed, flows showing that investors see Asia as a safe-haven play attest to investors' confidence in the region, underpinned by solid economic growth, strengthening domestic demand, still competitive exports, better policy and attractive earnings potential," it added.

The Philippines yielded a record-high BOP surplus of $6.75 billion from January to August this year on robust inflows from overseas Filipinos and foreign investors, based on the latest data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. The rising BOP reflected the strong build-up in the gross international reserves, which breached the $30-billion mark in end-August.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the local economy and the rest of the world.

The country's gross domestic product (GDP), the most closely watched economic indicator which sums up all goods and services produced by the local economy, grew by 7.3 percent in the first semester to hit its strongest in 20 years.

BNP Paribas said the credit headwinds triggered by rising delinquencies among US subprime mortgage credit, or housing loans given to borrowers with imperfect credit history and little equity, had a limited fallout in Asia as risk appetite for Asian assets remained strong.

Exports to New Zealand up 25%

By Amy R. Remo

PHILIPPINE AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO New Zealand reached $2.5 million in June, up 25 percent from the $2 million recorded in the same month last year, said the Department of Agriculture.

In a letter to Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap, New Zealand Ambassador David Pine said the "largest rise was in the value of bananas and plantains."

Based on data from the National Statistics Office, exports of fresh bananas to New Zealand increased by 160 percent to $986,480 from last year's $380,080.

"There were also significant improvements in the sales of dates, figs, pineapples and avocados," Pine wrote in his letter to Yap.

Exports of fresh pineapples in June meanwhile grew by 189 percent to $140,049 from last year's $48,415.

Pine likewise congratulated Yap, Agriculture Undersecretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat and Ambassador Donald Dee "for this remarkable trade performance."

"We cannot be sure how much of the improvement is directly due to the success of President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit earlier this year," Pine continued in his letter. "But the increase is too large to be unrelated to the hard work that you (Yap), Undersecretary Puyat and Ambassador Dee put into the promotion of Philippine agriculture."

As of June this year, nine New Zealand-based importers and distributors have pledged to buy over $30 million worth of Philippine fresh and processed agro-fishery products.

This was a result of the product exhibit and selling mission conducted by the DA during President Macapagal-Arroyo's recent state visit to the southwestern Pacific country.

According to Puyat, New Zealand buyers will be importing mangoes, bananas, pineapples, dried mangoes, banana chips, desiccated coconut, canned sardines, ready-mix sauces, dried anchovies and squids, pili nuts, biscuits, juice in tetra packs, spices (chili and tamarind), fresh coconut and fresh coco juice.

The DA has likewise entered into a partnership with one of the biggest health food companies, Sanitarium Health Food Co., for the sale of Philippine fresh and processed fruits and fruit products.

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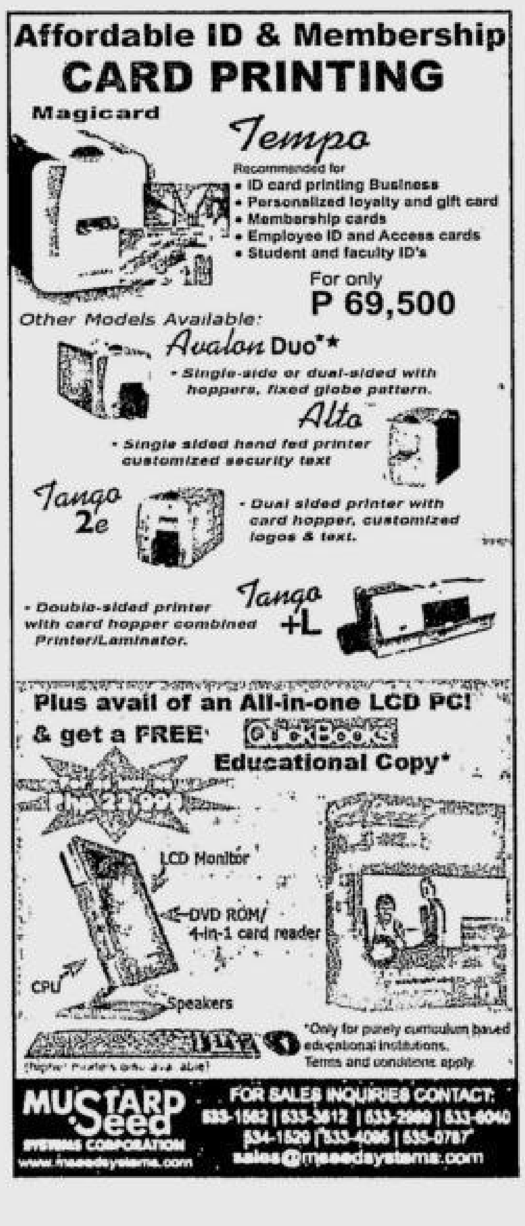

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SLFP: All for the president

ANY COMPANY WHO HAS STAYED IN THE market for more than a century is bound to possess a secret. Sun Life Financial-Philippines (SLFP) has been securing the future of Filipinos for 112 years after surviving two world wars, two people power revolutions, and several tumultuous local events.

There has to be a secret, and it is not a very well kept one. In fact, it is revealed every October, a celebration that starts and ends with festivity and homage to the long tradition of Sun Life in the country. That secret is called the President's Month.

Rich in history

The President's Month is one of the annual sales competitions of SLFP. It begins with a kick-off, where new business managers give their respective pledges, their branch's target for the end of the month. As its name implies, the achievements made during the President's Month are all dedicated to the company's top honcho.

This tradition comes from a long line of predecessors, specifically the Independence Cup established after the declaration of sovereignty in 1946. Eventually, the event came to be known as the President's Month. It used to be a contest participated in by other Sun Lifers from other Asian countries like Hong Kong. Today, it is only SLFP that maintained the custom. And it is a decision that Filipino Sun Lifers will never regret.

Bite of culture

"We make the President's Month always special and memorable," said Henry Joseph Herrera, SLFP president and chief executive officer.

He also noted the prominence of culture in the continuing success of the event: "Filipinos love celebrations, and that is what we try to offer our agents every October. We put in a theme, sometimes complete with costumes, and our kick-offs look like a big community fiesta, further increasing the stamina and zest to achieve the company's goals for the year,"

With the hype and revelry that are often associated with the President's Month, SLFP agents feel energized and revved up. The personal and professional combination of meeting the pledges and offering all efforts to their president makes a very potent mix for an effective business stimulator.

Last hurrah

If SLFP agents look forward to the President's Month, their competitors become "apprehensive" on its outcome. "This is the last hurrah, so to speak," says Roy Yu, senior vice president for sales. "This is our last chance in the year to turn a bad year into a good year, or make a good year a spectacular year!"

Over time, the President's Month proved to be the best conclusion for Sun Life's sales year. With a clearer idea of where they stand among industry rivals, the agency force would be inspired to exceed their goals expressed during the kick-off. The spirit of camaraderie surfaces, and everyone unites to not only bring honor to their branches but to the company as a whole.

"The real message of the President's Month is that everybody counts, and the driving force behind it is that it is one great opportunity to make a difference. And making a difference is in the context of the agent's effort at securing the future for one more Filipino family, aside from making one more sale in support of the company's goals. That is why the success of President's month is measured by number of applications (i.e. number of lives insured), and the motto is 100 percent participation, " stresses Raoul Littaua, senior vice president for marketing.

In fact, some insurance providers have tried to copy the enthusiasm of the President's Month. This makes the contest, which Sun Lifers call one of the most powerful in their sales arsenal, an open secret for others to emulate. But the integration of historical, cultural, and marketing factors makes imitation rather impossible.

"How can they adopt the Sun Life way of doing things? Have they been around for 112 years?" concludes Herrera. As of the moment, it is only SLFP who can boast of such a feat.

Plantersbank SME Industrial Park launch

PHILIPPINE Export Zone Authority (Peza) director Lilia de Lima, Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia, Plantersbank chair and CEO Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting and Presidential Management Staff Director and Cabinet Oversight Officer for Micro Small and Medium Enterprise Secretary Cerge Remonde cuts the ribbon to signify the opening of the country's first SME Industrial Park.

PLANTERSBANK chair and CEO Ambassador Jesus P. Tambunting shows a scale model of the SME Industrial Park to Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia and DTI Cebu Provincial Director Nelia Navarro.

ADBOARD DONATES BOOKS TO AD FOUNDATION

The Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard), the governing body of Philippine advertising, turned over some copies of the book, 'AdBoard: 25 Years of Self-Regulation' to the Advertising Foundation of the Philippines (Ad Foundation), the industry's social development institution and a subsidiary of the AdBoard, on the occasion of its recent consultative meeting on partnership and collaborative projects for the benefit of all stakeholders of the industry. In the book presentation and turnover were (from left): Alex Castro III, AdBoard executive director; Louie Morales, past 6-term chair of the AdBoard and founding chair of Ad Foundation; Johnip G. Cua, incumbent Ad Foundation chair; Andre S. Kahn, incumbent chair of the AdBoard; Raul S. Alvarez, incumbent AdBoard director and president of the Philippine Association of National Advertisers (Pana); Dino Laurena, incumbent director of the Association of Accredited Advertising Agencies of the Philippines (AAAA-P); Randy Aquino, incumbent 4As-P president; and Linda C. Gamboa, Ad Foundation assistant board secretary and executive director. The books shall form part of the collection of the Foundation's Advertising Library, and will be of invaluable benefit to students and young professionals of marketing communications.

FAVILA SEEKS PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila recently urged the private sector, in particular companies or groups with electronic payment and collection systems in place, to partner with the government in implementing Republic Act No. 8792 or the e-Commerce Act. In his speech at an Executive Forum held at the Dusit Hotel in Makati, organized by BancNet, the country's largest ATM and payments network, Favila said, 'Our goal is to enable our clients transacting with the government to have access to different modes or channels of payment - be it through ATMs, debit cards, stored-value cards, mobile wallets, kiosk and credit cards, whether at point-of-sale or through the Internet'. Such system is expected to minimize face-to-face transactions, facilitate and simplify procedures, and thereby, reduce corruption and red tape. BancNet is already in partnership with the BIR for the latter's Electronic Filing and Tax Payment System and with the SSS for the electronic collection of members' monthly contributions and loan amortizations.

PHAP MARKS 61ST ANNIVERSARY

The Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) marks its 61st anniversary by vowing to continuously strengthen its alliance with government and non-government organizations in implementing its various pro-poor programs. Through its PHAPCares Foundation, PHAP has been actively working with different organizations in implementing its programs particularly the integrated medicine donation program for indigent and disadvantaged Filipinos. Photo shows NDCC Deputy Administrator Dr. Anthony Rolando T. Golez, Jr. attending to two indigent patients during a joint NDCC-PHAPCares surgical and medical mission in Tawi-Tawi in Mindanao, one of the most poorest provinces in the country.

DIALYSIS CENTER OPENS IN WACK WACK

Committed to providing optimal healthcare at affordable cost for Filipinos living with kidney disease, M3 Dialysis Center has recently inaugurated its latest out-patient clinic in Edsa, Mandaluyong City. The newly-opened center boasts of state-of-the-art facilities, spacious treatment area, courteous and caring staff dedicated in delivering utmost medical services to kidney patients. Shown in photo during the formal opening rites were (from left): Congressman Ferjemel Biron from the 4th District of Iloilo City; Dr. Rey H. de los Reyes (CEO); Dr. Pompeyo R. Bautista, medical director with Dr. and Mrs. Vemuri, business partners from the US. M3 Dialysis Center is conveniently located at Ground Floor, Unit B&C, Highway 54 Plaza, Wack Wack, Mandaluyong City (across Megamall) with tel. nos. 706-1745/407-9326/0922-8706172/0922-8706174.

CEMEX' SOLID CEMENT PRODUCTS CARRY GREEN CHOICE SEAL

After several months of evaluation by the National Eco-labelling Board of the Philippines, Solid Cement Corp, a member of the Cemex Philippines Group of Companies, can now use the Green Choice Seal on their consumer-trusted products: Cemex Island Portland cement, Cemex Palitada King, and Cemex Rizal Super Portland cement with Philippine Tuff. The hard-earned Green Choice seal of approval was achieved through various programs for a cleaner and greener environment. Under the company's Eco-efficiency Program, the company has continued its focus on implementing sweeping environmental initiatives. Furthermore, the company continues to seek for new and better ways to help promote environmental conservation. Shown are (from left): Paul Arcenas, VP for strategic planning; PV Aquino, VP for commercial; Miguel Estrada, VP for operations; Gina Eala, VP for human resources; First Lady Amelita Ramos, chairperson of the Clean and Green Foundation; Director Jesus Motoomul, Bureau of Product Standards of the Department of Trade and Industry; Director Ely Anthony Ovano, Environmental Management Bureau of DENR and Ricardo Pasua, president of Clean and Green Foundation.

BITS Clips

Anlene Movement slated

ANLENE, THE EXPERT IN BONE NUTRITION, recently launched the Anlene Movement, a crusade to raise awareness and prevention of Osteoporosis among Filipinos. The kick-off event will be held on Oct. 20, World Osteoporosis Day, at the CCP Complex, where a huge convergence of women and men will be expected, united in the call to battle the threat of osteoporosis. Statistics show that 1 out of 2 Filipinos are at risk for Osteoporosis. Spokesperson Dina Bonnevie will lead the Anlene Movement, as it attempts to break a world record for the most number of people, dancing in a single event, currently held by Ireland, which gathered 7,600 dancers. Registration starts at 6:30 a.m. at the Baywalk side of Roxas Boulevard (beside Manila Yacht Club). A dance parade will then make its way towards the CCP Complex at 8 a.m., where the record breaking attempt will take place. Registered attendees will be able to have free bone scanning tests, aerobic and dance clinics onsite. A lot of exciting activities, prizes and freebies await the attendees, everyone is invited, especially women, to make a commitment to stronger bones, by participating in the Anlene Movement on Oct. 20. Remember dancing is a fun way to get into the Anlene's total bone health habit of drinking 2 glasses of milk and taking 10,000 steps daily. For inquiries, call the Anlene Movement hotline at 688-1696, 746-2923 or 747-9011.

The battle with breast cancer continues

THE PHILIPPINE WACOAL CORP AND THE PHILIPPINE FOUNDATION FOR Breast Care Inc (PFBCI) maintain its commitment to provide substantial knowledge and insight about breast cancer awareness for all ages and gender. The "Keep Abreast" campaign that starts in October is the third partnership for Wacoal and PFBCI on their advocacy for early diagnosis, prevention and treatment of breast cancer. Public seminars will be held at the Ateneo de Manila Professional Schools in Rockwell Center, Makati City on Oct. 6, 13, 30 and 27 (Saturdays). Admission is free and open to the public. Limited seats are available and reservations should be made through Keep Abreast hotline: 497-8196; PFBCI hotline: 927-3492 or Wacoal customer service hotline: 884-1517. Inquiries can also be sent to customer.service@wacoal.ph.

Speechpower conducts free lecture series

SPEECHPOWER HOLDS A MUCH-ANTICIPATED LECTURE SERIES TO highlight the center's 36th year in the industry. Lectures are for free and open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. Lecture topics, dates, and venues are as follows: "Rev up your Reading", Oct. 5, Friday, 6-8 p.m., España branch; "Oral Presentation Skills", Oct. 12, Friday, 6-8 p.m., Buendia branch; "Breaking the IELTS Code: Getting a 7 in Speaking", Oct. 12 and 19, Fridays, 6-8 p.m., España and Buendia branches, respectively; "Writing Business Letters for Impact", Oct. 13, Saturday, 10-12nn, Cubao branch; "American Accent Training", Oct. 20, Saturday, 2-4 p.m., Cubao branch; "Guilt-Free Grammar", Oct. 26, Friday, 6-8 p.m., Buendia branch; and "Talk Your Way to Success," Oct. 27, Saturday, 10-12nn, Cubao branch. Classes for the Oct. '07 Two-Week Intensive Program (TWIP) on Oct. 15; while the November-December '07 Program, on Nov. 7, 8, and 10. Separate orientation sessions and sample lessons for the specified terms are to be announced separately. Speechpower is strategically located at Speechpower-Joshua Building, 932 Aurora Boulevard, near corner 20th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City (911-0832 to 34); 4/F Dona Amparo Building, Espana corner Tolentino Streets, Sampaloc, Manila (735-7256/735-7312/735-7262); and 2116 Buendia corner Taft Avenues, Pasay City (833-2921/833-2836).

Amlodine Beselate now in Mercury Drug Stores

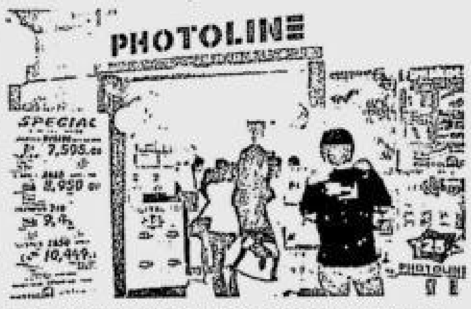
INNOGEN PHARMA INC, AN INNOVATIVE 100 PERCENT FILIPINO pharmaceutical company has released the only equivalent of the country's most widely prescribed medication for hypertension – at nearly 80 percent of the drug's present cost. Innovating Generics, or InnoGen, launched in early August its generic version of Amlodipine Besylate, calling it Amlodine that is priced almost 80 percent less than Norvasc, the best-selling product of US-based Pfizer. InnoGen Amlodine Beselate is now available in Mercury Drugs and other major drug stores in the country is priced as P19.75 per 10-milligram pill almost 75 percent lower than the price of a 10 milligram pill of Norvasc at P74.75. InnoGen Amlodine Beselate is the most prescribed medication for high blood pressure in the Philippines and anywhere in the world.

Deadline extended for Animahenasyon 2007

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ENTRIES TO THE FIRST ANIMAhenasyon 2007 Pinoy Animation Festival has been extended until Oct. 8. The competition is open to all professional and amateur animators. The festival, which is spearheaded by the Animation Council of the Philippines (Acpi), aims to showcase original content in Philippine animation and the recognition of the Filipino talent in the field of animation, aiming for local and international animation excellence and competitiveness. Application forms and mechanics to the competition can be downloaded from the ACPI website, www.animationcouncil.org. Entries must be sent to: Animation Council of the Phils Inc (Acpi), Towers Business Center, 11/F CyberOne Bldg Eastwood City Cyberpark E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave., Quezon City. For more info call 438-2983 to 85 local 150/151 ask for Mario or Laisa. email: animationcouncil@gmail.com.

ProductFILES

Photoline opens at Trinoma



PHOTOLINE RECENTLY OPENED ITS NEW branch at Trinoma, dubbed as a super regional mall with high-end shopping and service establishments. The mall is directly connected to the MRT's North Ave. Station. Photoline's latest branch is located at the 2nd floor in front of the Landmark department store near the MRT entrance. This is Photoline's 3rd branch inside an Ayala mall. Photoline now has one of the largest branch networks in the country, with branches located in all major cities. The company's well-trained staff are known for giving quality customer service. Photoline services range from digital printing, studio shots and ID photos. Professional photographers can avail of their special wholesale printing rates by inquiring at hotline 0917-5384420. All stores also carry a full line of digital cameras at amazingly low prices. Customers can avail of the free items with each camera purchased.

The perfect mouse for your Bluetooth notebook

INTRODUCING THE latest Bluetooth optical mouse made for your Bluetooth-enabled notebook. The new Genius Navigator R820BT features a wireless technology utilizing a powerful 800dpi optical sensor. It instantly connects to Bluetooth-enabled notebooks, with a range of up to 10 meters. No more cord tangles. Genius Navigator R820BT has a rechargeable function which is distinctive and convenient, making this mouse highly-reliable for long-term use. Simply connect the USB charging cable to your PC and the batteries will automatically recharge even when you are using it. Unlike other wireless mice, the Navigator R820BT doesn't require a receiver. The Navigator R820BT makes you more productive with your work by adding convenience and efficiency to your computer applications. Genius products are exclusively distributed in the Philippines by MSI-ECS. For more information, contact James Ong at 688-3740, e-mail jong@msi-ecs.com.ph, or visit www.msi-ecs.com.ph.

GlemGas Cooking Appliances recommended by top chefs

GLEMGAS COOKING Appliances has recently been regarded by acclaimed chefs such as chef Hubertus Cramer (in photo), as the best in the culinary scene. Known as the Italian cooking specialist, GlemGas manufactures quality cooking appliances and exports 75 percent of its products to different countries in the world. It meets the stringent standards of chef Cramer of Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila because of its durability, technology, and efficiency. GlemGas is exclusively distributed in the Philippines by Excellence Appliance Technologies. For inquiries, please call 712-0535.

UCPB SAVINGS ACQUIRED ASSET FOR SALE

Location : Lot 17 Blk 3 # 32 Molave Avenue, Park Subd., Merville, Parañaque
Description : Res. Lot with improvement
Lot Area : 346 sqm.
Indicative Price: P4,165,200.00

For Inquiries: Pls. call Ms. Lulu or Ms. Star at tel. no. 811-9000 local 7243/7251

In the **SAVINGS ACQUIRED ASSET FOR SALE** ad of **UCPB** published last **September 29, 2007**, the location should have read **Lot 17 Blk 3 #32 Molave Avenue, ParkSubd., Merville, Parañaque**, and not **#36** as published.

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform that orig. BOI Certificate of Registration with No. EP89-1023, dated Feb. 7, 1989 of GTI Manufacturing, Inc. (formerly: BIFLEX (PHIL.), INC.) was declared lost. If no contest received, new certificate will be issued.

(PDI–Oct. 2, 2007)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DOH-Bicol Sanitarium (BS), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

Item/Description	Approved Budget for The Contract	Date/Time			Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Issuance of Bid Documents	Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
Medical Equipment	P 2,789,488.00	September 28- October 16, 2007	October 5, 2007 9:00 AM	October 17, 2007 9:00 AM	P 1,500.00
Office and Facility Equipment	P 1,796,138.00	September 28- October 16, 2007	October 5, 2007 2:00 PM	October 18, 2007 9:00 AM	P 1,500.00

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino Citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from Bicol Sanitarium's BAC Office upon payment of a non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference and the Bidding Proper will be held at SRC Hall, Bicol Sanitarium, Cabusao, Camarines Sur.

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of any of the following: Cash (1%), Bank Guarantee (1.5%), GSIS Surety Bond (2.5%) or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bicol Sanitarium reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the Bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

For more information, please contact the BAC Office at Tel. Nos. (054) 451-2244/ (0920) 642-8771 and look for Ms. Romina C. Ignacio or Ms. Francia J. Milano.

(Sgd.) VICENTE Y. UY
BAC Chairman

(PDI–October 02, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services (BAC-GS) of the Supreme Court of the Philippines ("the Court") invites interested bidders qualified under Republic Act No. 9184 *(The Government Procurement Reform Act)* and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Project:

Name of Project	Approved Budget	Source of Funding
Lot 1		
Maintenance Supplies (4th Quarter 2007) for the Supreme Court	P 2,321,300.00	General Appropriations Act–CY 2007
Lot 2		
Supreme Court Healthcare Services Project	P 27,243,917.00	General Appropriations Act–CY 2007

2. PERIOD OF DELIVERY/CONTRACT:
For Lot 1 – 15 calendar days
For Lot 2 – One calendar year
3. SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:
A. PRE-BID CONFERENCE
The pre-bid conference will be held on:

Project	Date and Time	Venue
Lot 1	October 9, 2007, Tuesday, 9:00 a.m.	Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Old Building Supreme Court, Taft Ave., cor. Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Lot 2	October 9, 2007, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Old Building Supreme Court, Taft Ave., cor. Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila

4. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS
The eligibility requirements of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative, and the bids will be opened, thereafter, in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, to be held on:

Project	Date and Time	Venue
Lot 1	October 23, 2007, Tuesday, 9:00 a.m.	Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Old Building Supreme Court, Taft Ave., cor. Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila
Lot 2	October 23, 2007, Tuesday, 10:00 a.m.	Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Old Building Supeme Court, Taft Ave., cor. Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila

Deadline for submission of eligibility requirements with Technical and Financial Proposal Envelope for Lot 1 shall be at 8:30 a.m. and for Lot 2 shall be at 9:30 a.m. and the opening of bids shall immediately follow.

5. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security, in the form and amount prescribed in the Instruction to bidders. Late bids shall not be accepted.
6. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in R.A. 9184 and its IRR. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Bids in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage to finally determine responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the Project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
7. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased, in cash, by interested Bidders from the **Office of BAC-GS Secretariat** starting **October 2, 2007** at the address indicated below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) for Lot 1, and Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00) for Lot 2,** prior to the conduct of pre-bid conference. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or its authorized representative. The Committee will only accept Bids from Bidders who have purchased the Bidding Documents from the office indicated below.
8. Prospective bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the BAC-GS or its Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.
9. The BAC-GS reserves the right to: (a) reject any or all bids; (b) waive any defect or formality in the bid requirements; (c) accept such bids as are deemed advantageous to the Court; (d) declare a failure of bidding; and (e) make no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this Invitation.

September 25, 2007
Office of the Secretariat
BAC-GS
Office of Assistant Court Administrator Nimfa C. Vilches
Supreme Court of the Philippines
Taft Avenue cor. Padre Faura St., Ermita
Manila 1000
Contact Person: Ms. Evangeline D. Reyes
Tel. No. 523-13-01

(Sgd.) NIMFA. C. VILCHES
Assistant Court Administrator &
Chairperson, BAC-GS

(PDI – October 2, 2007)

Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corporation
A Global Corporation with a Global Mindset and a Filipino Heart

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB NO.: 09-09-2007 HM

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is inviting all interested car manufacturers / dealers in its forthcoming public bidding for the project stated hereunder:

Name of Project	Supply and Delivery of Three (3) Lots Brand New Vehicles
Technical Specifications	**Lot 1 – One (1) Unit Brand New Sedan – Vehicle.** Sedan Type; Engine: 2.4L 4 cylinder in-line, 16-valve Fuel Injection, 167/6,000 PS/RPM and torque of 224/4,000 nm/rpm with catalytic converter; 5-speed Automatic transmission with super Electronic Controlled Transmission (ECT). Rack and pinion with power assist, 4 stroke urethane, tilt adjustable steering column, Leather seats. 8 way driver & passenger power switch, reclining side and vertical adjust with passenger switch; 2 way power reclining with adjustable headrest & armrest; Audio System: Integrated type/Tuner/ in dash 6 CD changer MP3/WMA with 6 speakers. Aircon: Automatic climate control with digital push type control with plasma cluster, HID headlamps, headlamp leveling device, chrome radiator grille fog lamp, power retractable hydrophyical with side turn signal lamp, Suspension: Front McPherson strut type with stabilizer bars, rear dual link independent strut suspension with stabilizer bar. **Lot 2 – One (1) Unit Brand New 11-Seater Commuter Van** – Vehicle: 11-Seater Van; Engine: 2.5 L 4-stroke Common Rail Diesel (D-4D) 2 KD FTV, 4 speed automatic transmission, 4 cylinder in-line 16 valve Double Overhead Camshaft (DOHC) Turbo charged, 102/3,600 hp/rpm; Torque: 260nm/ 1,600-2,400rpm. Rack and pinion power assist, 2-spoke urethane tilt adjustable steering column, 11 seater; Interior: leather seats, dash mounted shift lever, Optitron meters, captain seats, power control switches, center console box, bottle and cup holders, rear seat cup holders and back pockets; Audio: 2 DIN CD/Tuner/MP3/DVD/remote control with 4 speakers, 2 headrest mounted monitors. Exterior: Color-keyed front and rear bumper, chrome front grille with hood moulding, multi-reflector halogen headlamps with integrated clearance and turn lamp, fog lamps, rear window defogger, rear roof spoiler, dual sliding doors with auto easy closer door. Front double wishbone with stabilizer bar, rear rigid axle with leaf springs, Safety: Anti-locking Brake System, Dual SRS airbags, high mount lamp (LED type) **Lot 3: Two (2) Units Brand New All-Purpose Van** – Vehicle: 4.6L V8 engine, Rear wheel drive, 4-speed Automatic with overdrive. Maximum power: 225hp/4,800rpm; Four wheel ABS (Anti-locking brake system), Speed sensitive variable assist power steering system, Suspension: Front-twin 1-beam suspension, gas pressurized shock absorbers bar. Air-conditioning front and rear with multiple ducts and rear climate control, fingertip electronic speed control, Audio: Premium AM/FM stereo/ Single in-dash CD/Casette/6 speakers/clock, Front captains chair, 2nd row captains chair, 3rd and 4th row quick release seats, tilt adjustable steering wheel, 2nd generation SRS airbags, high visibility center mounted stop lamps, Brake/Shift interlock feature; remote illuminated and keyless entry; Securilock Passive anti-theft system, Side door intrusion; Seat Capacity: 10-seater *Note: Bidders may bid for one or all lots*
Approved Budget	: Lot 1 – One Million Six Hundred Fifty Eight Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php1,658,500.00) Lot 2 – One Million Seven Hundred Eighty Three Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php1,783,500.00) Lot 3 – Three Million Eight Hundred Fifteen Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Pesos (Php3,815,660.00)
Source of Fund	: Internally Funded
Venue	: **Casino Filipino Hyatt Manila**

Only suppliers duly registered with PAGCOR shall be allowed to participate in the bidding. Unregistered suppliers must register at the Suppliers Registration & Evaluation Section (SRES), Procurement & Property Department (PPD), 2nd Floor PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila, Tel. No. 526-0573.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	October 02, 2007 – October 23, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	October 10, 2007 (12:00 nn)
3. Submission of Bids	October 24, 2007 (12:00 nn)
4. Opening of Bids	October 24, 2007 (12:00 nn onwards)

Complete details of the project are indicated in the bid documents which will be available to prospective bidders at the Branch Bids and Awards Committee, (BBAC) Secretariat, Branch Procurement and Property Office, Casino Filipino Hyatt, MH Del Pilar corner Pedro Gil Streets, Malate Manila upon payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of *One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00) for Lot 1; One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00) for Lot 2; and One Thousand Nine Hundred Seven and 83/100 Pesos (Php1,907.83) for Lot 3.* In order to secure the documents, bidders should present the Official Receipt issued by our Cashier to the BBAC Secretariat.

PAGCOR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

PAGCOR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Please address all communications to the Branch Bids and Awards Committee, (BBAC) Secretariat, Branch Procurement and Propert; Office, Casino Filipino Hyatt, Tel. No. 247-1743.

(Sgd.) HILARIO T. MANALIGOD
Chairperson, BBAC CF-Hyatt

(PDI–Oct. 2, 2007

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
TNKC (MANILA) CORPORATION 16/F Marc 2000 Tower, 1973 Taft Ave., Malate, Manila	Kosaku Ikeno Japanese	General Manager-ISM & Quality Matters
SYKES ASIA INC. 26/F Robinsons Summit Center, 6783 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Wenyuan Liu Chinese	Mandarin Client Support
INSTRUMECH PHILIPPINES, INC. 177-A Tandang Sora Ave., Tandang Sora, Quezon City	Ajmair Singh Sidhu Singaporean	Engineering Consultant
OHSUNG TRAVEL & TOURS AGENCY, INC. Unit 13-8137 Plaza J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hyunwoo Kim Korean	Asst. Human Resources Manager
OHSUNG TRAVEL & TOURS AGENCY, INC. Unit 13-8137 Plaza J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Geunhee Cho Korean	Asst. Operations Manager
NO. 1 ACTIVITY NETWORK SYSTEM (NANS), INC. Unit 22pc Eisenhower Condo., #7 Eisenhower St., San Juan City	Youngok Oh (w/o Kwak) Korean	Asst. Exec. for Human Resources
SPRINT INTERNATIONAL INC. 1000 East Service Rd., Km. 19.8 So. Superhighway, Cupang, Muntinlupa City	Manish Chandru Mahtani Indian	Vice President for Operations
WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL Unit 1504 Antel Global Corp. Ctr., J. Vargas Ave., Pasig City	Shishir Kumar Indian	Technical Support Officer
APAC CUSTOMER SERVICES, INC. Northgate Cyberzone Filinvest Corp. City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Jagadish U. Parikh American	Vertical Business Workforce Manager
TOPGAMES, INC. Unit C 8/F, Marvin Plaza Bldg., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Ching Nam Cheung Chinese	IT Technician
S.J. LAND INC. 15/F Tower 2, Insular Life Corp. Ctr., Insular Life Drive, FCC, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Youngsung You Korean	Assistant Manager
WIDERTHAN PHILIPPINES Unit 1206-1208 Ayala Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Sang Hyun Lee Korean	Business Planning Director
BERKMAN INTERNATIONAL, INC. Suite 403 VAG Bldg., Ortigas Ave., Greenhills, San Juan City	Rafael Fernando Faria Maltez Australian	Consultant/General Manager-Projects
KABANG KALIKASAN NG PILIPINAS FOUNDATION, INC. 4/F JBD Plaza, 65 Mindanao Ave., Bagong Pag-asa, Quezon City	Audrey Francoise Michele Revillon French	Corporate Relationship Manager
PHILIPPINE GOLF LINE KOREA, INC. Unit 401 Pacific Coast Plaza Cond., 1st Villamar St., Subd., Parañaque City	Hauri Park Korean	Marketing Manager
ADVANCED WORLD SYSTEMS, INC. 5/F Citibank-Frabelle Bldg., Madrigal Business Park, Alabang Zapote Rd., Muntinlupa City	Chie Fujita Japanese	Japanese Language Consultant

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC-Regional Director

(PDI–October 2, 2007)

OBITUARIES

Alex Legaspi Catedrilla

Filipino Artist, Composer and Singer
3-Time Cecil Awardee

peacefully joined our Creator on September 29, 2007 at the age of 51

His loving parents, **Alfredo (✝) and Clarita Catedrilla**; brothers and sisters **Thelma, Fernando (✝)** and **Vilma, Nelson** and **Ligaya, Freddie (✝)** and **Asuncion, Jerry, Jory** and **Amelita**; nephews and nieces **Neil, Alfred, Jeff Collins (✝), Mutya, McJovan, Joan, Ronaldo Jr., Loren, Kenneth, Karen, Kristine Joy, Fritzie, Gypsy, Alfred Lawrence, Jan Michael, Cindy, Tritzie**; relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Mt Carmel Chapels, New Manila, Quezon City. Necrological services to be held on Thursday, October 4, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.

His remains will be flown to his hometown Norala, South Cotabato, on October 6, 2007.

(Please omit flowers)

"*To everything there is a season,*
a time for every purpose under heaven."
Ecclesiastes 3:1

Engr. Froilan Tarray

Now peacefully rests in the infinite grace
and goodness of the Lord
on the 27th day of September, 2007
at the age of 70 years, 11 months and 22 days

His loving wife **Rosy B. Azupardo**;
daughters **Roscef, Fraulein, Rosylan,** and **Frances**;
son-in-law **Andro Juanito**; relatives and friends
request the pious readers to pray
for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state
at 10 Siping Street, Legazpi City.

Interment will be on Saturday, October 6, 2007,
2:00 p.m., at the Legazpi Catholic Cemetery.

More Classified Ad:

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
A4

Death Notice

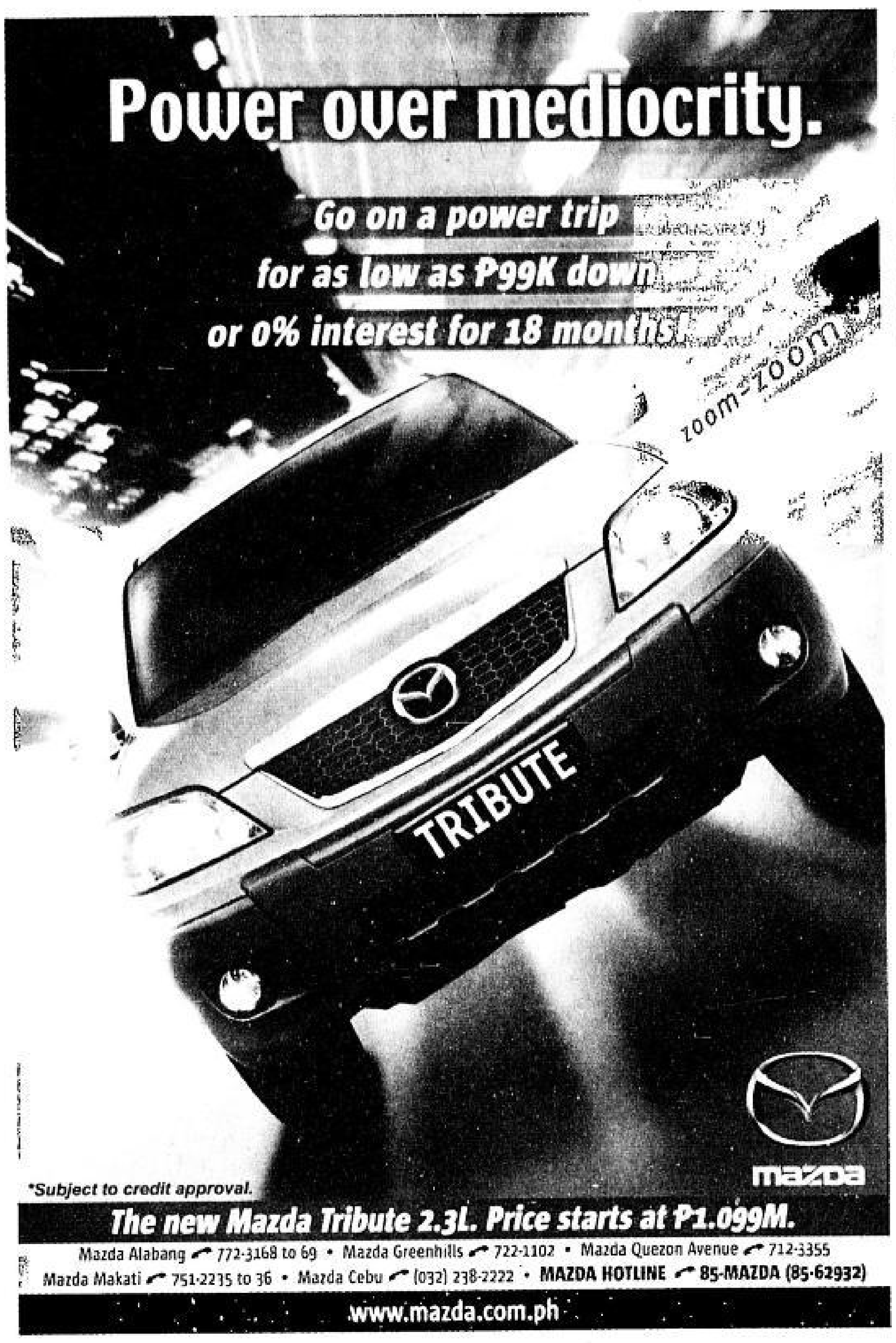
Amelia Mistades Dunagat

Died Sept. 26, 2007 at the age of 65.

Her body lies in state at her residence at 1958 J. Patino St., Sta. Ana, Manila. Interment today, Oct. 2, 2 p.m. at Manila South Cemetery, Makati City.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith. *(2 Timothy 4)*

BUSINESS



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RP-Japan deal pushed

Jpepa seen to jack up investments, exports

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TRADE OFFICIALS YESTERDAY said the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnersthip Agreement could pave the way for the inflow of P365 billion in additional investments and contribute another $720 million in export revenues to the country.

Trade Undersecretaries Thomas G. Aquino and Elmer C. Hernandez said so yesterday as they bared a five-year export promotion plan aligned with the Jpepa's implementation.

Aquino told reporters that exporters—most of which were small and medium enterprises—would benefit from the elimination of duties on 720 tariff lines. "These products include those that already have a high share in Japan's total imports," the chief trade negotiator said.

He was referring to certain marine products, fruits and nuts, animal or vegetable fats, preparations of meats and seafood products, beverages and spirits, mineral fuels and oils, plastics, wood products, cotton, clothing, and zinc.

Aquino said duties on 86 other tariff lines would be gradually lowered, resulting in additional export revenues of $86 million for the Philippines.

Aquino said that in the course of the Jpepa talks, Tokyo had offered to fix at zero four out of five tariff lines from a total of 7,476 tariff lines traded with Japan.

These include 6,521 lines that are already "locked in," meaning that duties are permanently zero as long as the Philippines and Japan agree to keep the pact.

At the same time, duties on 17 percent of tariff lines would be gradually removed.

Hernandez said that the Department of Industry's investment leads showed that the ratification of Jpepa would "provide Japanese companies a higher level of comfort that could lead to their decision to invest."

The investment leads, which Hernandez jacked up to P365 billion from the previous P211 billion, covered projects in 11 sectors.

Also yesterday, the Bureau of Export Trade Promotion said its proposed five-year plan consisted of four major activities—trade fair and exhibitions, in-store promotion and inbound and outbound business matching.

"With the actual performance of these activities yielding about $11 million in export sales in 2006, this amount can be tripled under the Jpepa," the BETP said in a statement.

TAMBUNTING

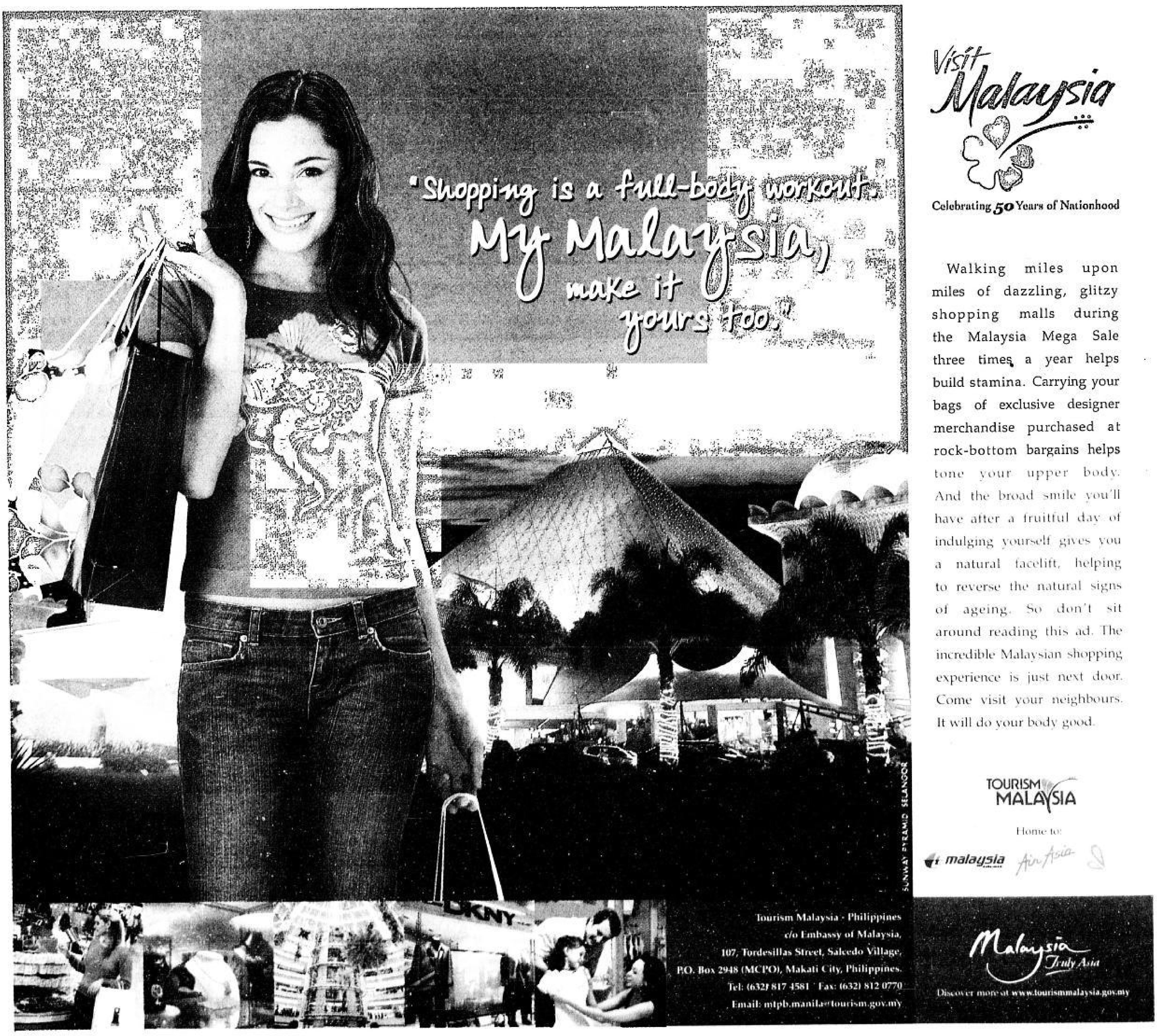
SME 'enablement' proposed in Apec

AMBASSADOR JESUS P. TAMBUNTING, chair and CEO of Planters Development Bank--the country's largest private SME development bank, proposed a new development approach called "SME enablement" for industrializing economies during the Apec Business Advisory Council SME Summit held in Melbourne.

The SME Summit, a pre-event to the Apec Economic Leaders meeting, was attended by senior business leaders and policy makers from across the Asia-Pacific region.

Tambunting said the growth of globally competitive small and medium enterprises could not be sustained unless bankers were prepared to support customers by integrating finance with SME-oriented technology, support infrastructure and capacity-building.

Plantersbank has put this SME "enablement" to practice by opening the first SME industrial park in the Philippines.



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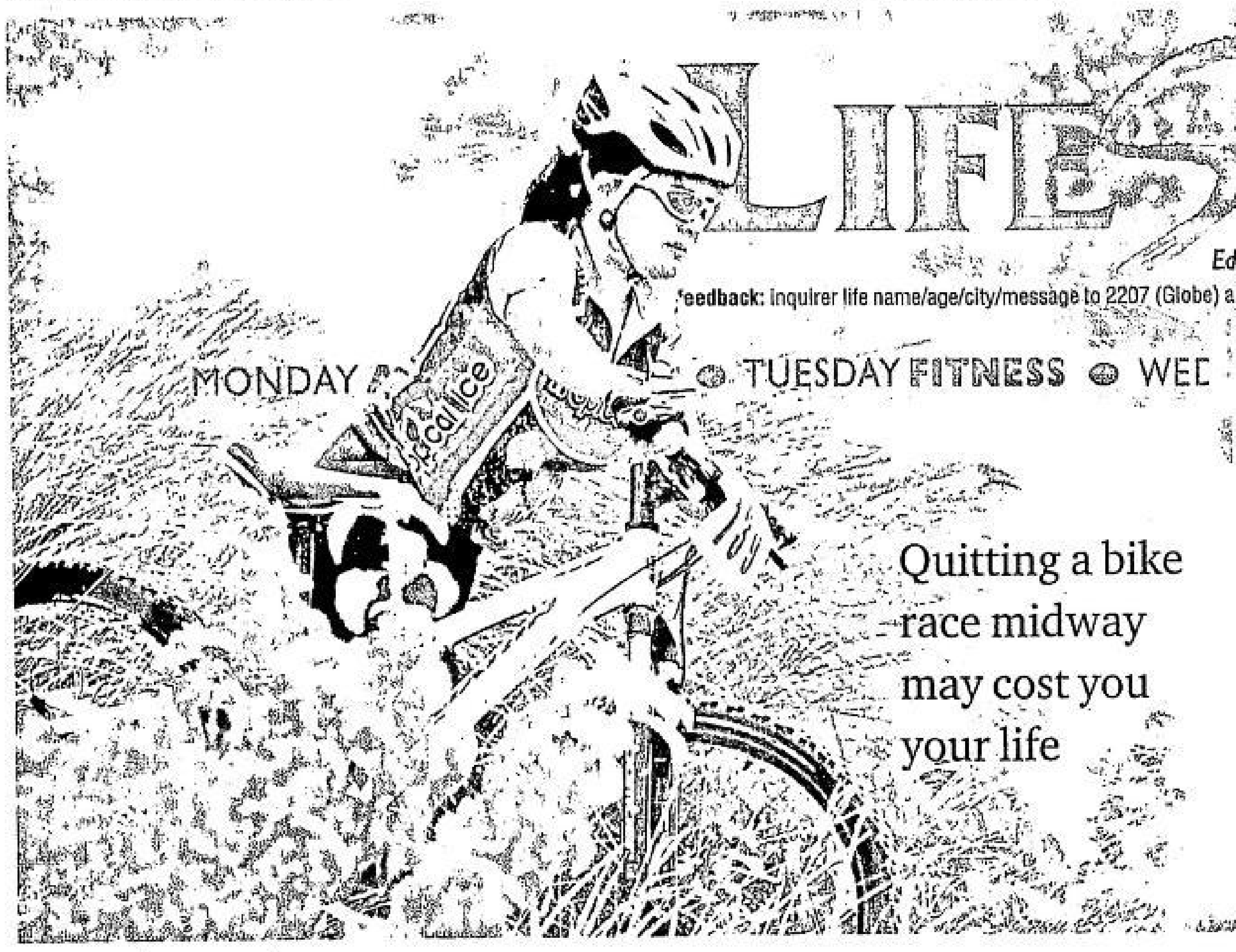
LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

MONDAY ⊕ TUESDAY FITNESS ⊕ WED



Quitting a bike race midway may cost you your life

A biker's life—sort of

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by August dela Cruz

COMMIT OR QUIT, I silently chanted.

My head reeled as I perched my bike on the edge of a 20-foot-or-so sudden drop-off, the rugged slope of jagged rocks and pebbles threatening to cut my limbs if I made the wrong move. As more experienced riders gleefully tackled the course like children let loose in a toy store, I knew I had to make a quick decision. This was, after all, a race.

When in a quandary, especially on a moving machine like a mountain bike, you don't quit halfway, especially not while you're negotiating a steep drop-off. When you commit to the sport, you commit a hundred percent with a devil-may-care abandon. You have to be one with the mountain, feel the earth beneath your body and move along with its bumps and drops.

Easier said than done! As my heart raced with fear and excitement, I decided that, no, I'm just not into commitment. With one hand on the handlebar and the other on the frame, I carried my bike down the slope, my face crimson red in shame.

Yes, I chickened out. What can I say? It was my first time.

Reality check

When I received an invitation to join a 24-hour mountain-bike endurance race from a coworker, my eyes lit up with foolish romanticized visions. I felt the same sensation when I took up the challenge to "bike in the skies" from Baguio to Sagada, or conquer Mount Maarat, when I hadn't the faintest idea where it was.

I mean, really, how could one resist "biking in the skies"? Sounds like a lovely ride, doesn't it? Reality check is never kind, for when you get there you have to do peak after peak of staggering uphill rides that will send your quads shivering and burning the way they never have before. Couple that with your sky-rocketing heart rate and shallow breathing and, trust me, you won't even have time to enjoy the picturesque view of the rice terraces.

So it was not surprising then that I promptly said yes to the 24-hour race before I could even think of the consequences. With Supplement editor Aries Espinosa and Special Sections reporter Charles Buban as my teammates, I knew I was in the company of two of

A BIKER'S/ C5

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✓ Burns Body Fat Faster
✓ Strengthens Immune System
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DESIGNER WHEY

Your Doctor Knows Best

Antonio H. Villalon MD, FPCP, FPSMO

Question:

I have noted a lump in my breast since three months ago. Is this breast cancer?

Doctor Says…

The human body is made up of different cells that compose tissues, forming organs like the breast. Our normal body cells grow and divide to replace dead or injured cells. Cancer may arise when we have abnormal cells growing in uncontrolled ways. When these happen to the cells in the breast, these may lead to breast cancer.

Breast cancer affects many women, with over one million diagnosed each year worldwide. Almost all breast cancers occur in women but this can also affect men.

The cause of most breast cancer is yet to be identified. Many factors are considered to contribute in the development of breast cancer. The incidence of breast cancer is increased in patients with a family member or relative diagnosed with breast cancer. This increased risk can be passed down to the next generation. Likewise, the incidence of breast cancer appears to be increased in patients with more exposure to estrogen (female sex hormone) such as those with early menstruation, late age of first pregnancy, late menopause and intake of hormone replacement therapy. Dietary factors like increased consumption of animal fats and proteins coupled with decreased intake of fiber are thought to increase the development of breast cancer as well.

The most common presenting symptom of breast cancer is a lump in the breast. Other signs and symptoms include changes in breast shape and size, bleeding from the nipple, ulceration (development of open wounds) in the surrounding breast area, orange peel appearance of the skin or lump in the armpit. It is important to note that not all breast lumps are cancerous. In fact, majority of breast lumps are benign – not capable of spreading to other parts of the body. Most lumps seen in the younger age group are benign and may warrant only close observation. Conversely, in older age group, it is important to determine if the lump is malignant (capable of spreading to other parts of the body).

Your doctor is best to determine if the lump you have is cancerous or not. He will do a complete evaluation by getting a detailed medical history and doing a breast examination. He may also order imaging studies like mammography (x-ray of the breast) or ultrasound and perform tissue biopsy (a small sample of the breast lump is obtained and viewed under the microscope). Please consult your doctor for more information on these procedures.

Treatment of breast cancer will vary depending on the presentation of each patient. Removal of cancer cells through surgery is often done. The lump can be surgically removed (lumpectomy) or the whole breast (mastectomy). Treatment may also include giving medicines that interfere with cancer cell growth (chemotherapy), exposing tumor to radiation (radiation therapy) and giving medicines that block the effects of estrogen, thus stopping or slowing cancer cell growth (hormonal therapy). It is important that the patient and patient's family take partnership with the doctor in the breast care team.

Early detection of breast cancer increases the chances of cure. For proper guidance, evaluation, and management, please consult your doctor.

Dr. Villalon is an Internist/Medical Oncologist. He is an active consultant at the Philippine General Hospital. He holds clinics at the Manila Doctors Hospital. Dr. Villalon is also a Professor at the University of the Philippines, College of Medicine.

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

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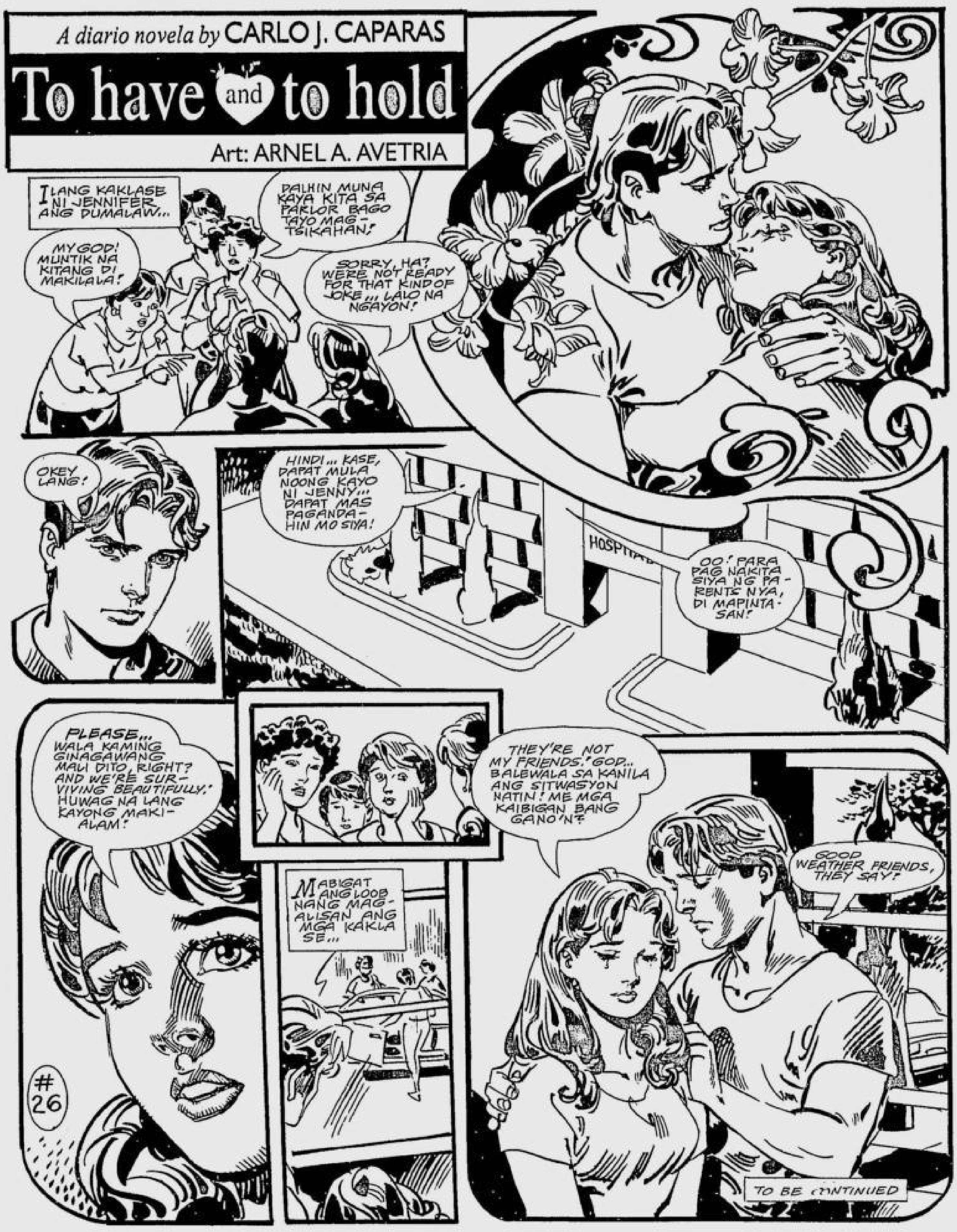
A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA


ILANG KAKLASE NI JENNIFER ANG DUMALAW...
MY GOD! MUNTIK NA KITANG DI MAKILALA!
DALHIN MUNA KAYA KITA SA PARLOR BAGO TAYO MAG-TSIKAHAN!
SORRY, HA? WE'RE NOT READY FOR THAT KIND OF JOKE... LALO NA NGAYON!
OKEY LANG!
HINDI... KASE, DAPAT MULA NOONG KAYO NI JENNY... DAPAT MAS PAGANDA-HIN MO SIYA!
HOSPITAL
OO! PARA PAG NAKITA SIYA NG PA-RENTS NYA, DI MAPINTA-SAN!
PLEASE... WALA KAMING GINAGAWANG MALI DITO, RIGHT? AND WE'RE SUR-VIVING BEAUTIFULLY! HUWAG NA LANG KAYONG MAKI-ALAM!
MABIGAT ANG LOOB NANG MAG-ALISAN ANG MGA KAKLA SE...
THEY'RE NOT MY FRIENDS! GOD.. BALEWALA SA KANILA ANG SITWASYON NATIN! ME MGA KAIBIGAN BANG GANO'N?
GOOD WEATHER FRIENDS, THEY SAY?
#26
TO BE CONTINUED

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Dunking maneuver
5 Matinee idol
9 Find repugnant
14 Drinking mug with a face
15 Comfort
16 Tenancy period
17 PC operator
18 Downfall
19 Favorite at the ball
20 Ridiculed, perhaps
23 Aardvark's snack
24 Annapolis grad
25 Have a lofty goal
29 Like dirty hearths
31 Poisonous snake
34 Place to get steamed
35 Urgent request
36 Chinese gooseberry
37 Reverse the fortunes of
40 Chills, as champagne
41 Vocalized
42 Arctic shelter
43 Grain in a Salinger title
44 Plaintiff
45 AWOL part
46 Raises, as stakes
47 Exist
48 Have one's revenge
57 Play the ham
58 Kitty stake
59 Half a sextet
60 Metric volume
61 Swerve off
62 Grimm baddie
63 Keep for later
64 Out of kilter
65 Canasta display

DOWN

1 Ticket piece
2 Give the slip to
3 Cover for a crook
4 "__ Breckinridge"
5 Cool and calm
6 Mocking reproach
7 Not likely!
8 Nevada city
9 Capital on the Hudson
10 Complaints
11 Sign of saintliness
12 Christiania, now
13 Stagger
21 Gold measure
22 Ford Clinic, e.g.
25 On the move
26 Impertinent
27 Liquefy
28 Rustic lodgings
29 Worship spot
30 Make watertight
31 Theater passageway
32 Have a fainting spell
33 Grape used for burgundies
35 Pierre's pop
36 Beer containers
38 Dwelling
39 Slander in print
44 Domain
45 Corpuscle carrier
46 Downright
47 Fall bloom
48 Solidifies
49 Send off
50 Dorothy's dog
51 Molten flow
52 From the top
53 Minute particle
54 Hankering
55 Young miss
56 Did field work

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	8	■	9	10	11	12	13
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■	■	■	46			■	■	47			■	■	■	■
48	49	50				51	52				53	54	55	56
57					■	58				■	59			
60					■	61				■	62			
63					■	64				■	65			

By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

10/2/07

Monday's Puzzle Solved

M	U	F	T	I	■	G	O	E	R	■	C	O	H	O
A	P	I	A	N	■	A	L	O	E	■	O	D	I	N
R	O	A	D	T	O	S	I	N	G	A	P	O	R	E
T	N	T	■	E	X	P	O	■	I	N	U	R	E	S
■	■	■	F	R	Y	■	■	G	O	A	L	■	■	■
T	W	E	R	P	■	W	A	R	N	■	A	L	M	S
E	A	G	E	R	■	I	L	I	A	C	■	E	E	L
S	T	R	E	E	T	S	O	F	L	A	R	E	D	O
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A	R	T	S	■	A	L	E	S	■	P	S	Y	C	H
■	■	■	T	I	D	Y	■	■	P	E	T	■	■	■
A	S	S	U	R	E	■	O	M	E	R	■	A	D	S
T	E	N	N	E	S	S	E	E	A	V	E	N	U	E
O	M	I	T	■	I	R	I	S	■	A	R	E	N	A
P	I	P	S	■	N	I	L	S	■	N	E	W	E	L

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10/2/07

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

	7		1	4				
6		2						
	4	1	8		6			
8		7				9		
2				1				5
		9				1		7
			5		3	2	8	
						6		4
				6	7		5	

Difficulty Level ★★ 10/02

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Answer to previous puzzle

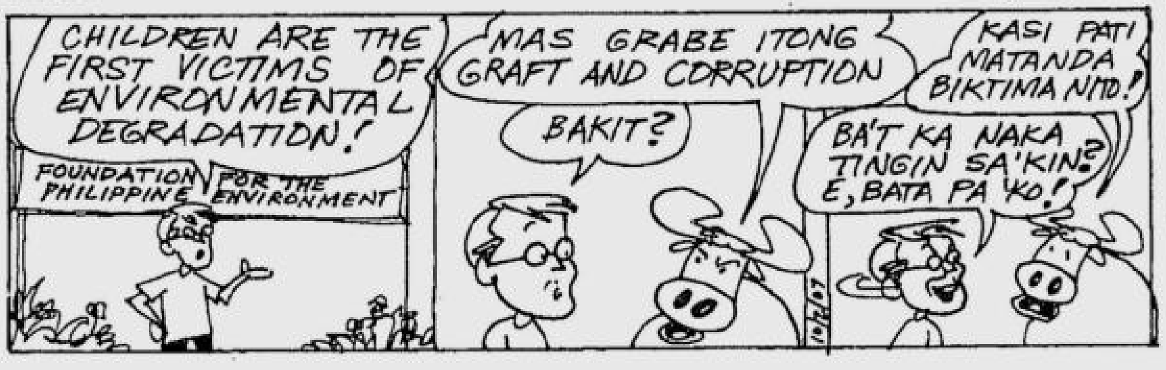
7	6	4	3	9	5	8	1	2
8	9	2	4	1	6	5	7	3
3	1	5	8	2	7	6	9	4
9	5	3	2	6	1	7	4	8
4	2	7	5	3	8	1	6	9
6	8	1	7	4	9	2	3	5
2	7	9	6	5	4	3	8	1
1	3	6	9	8	2	4	5	7
5	4	8	1	7	3	9	2	6

Difficulty Level ★

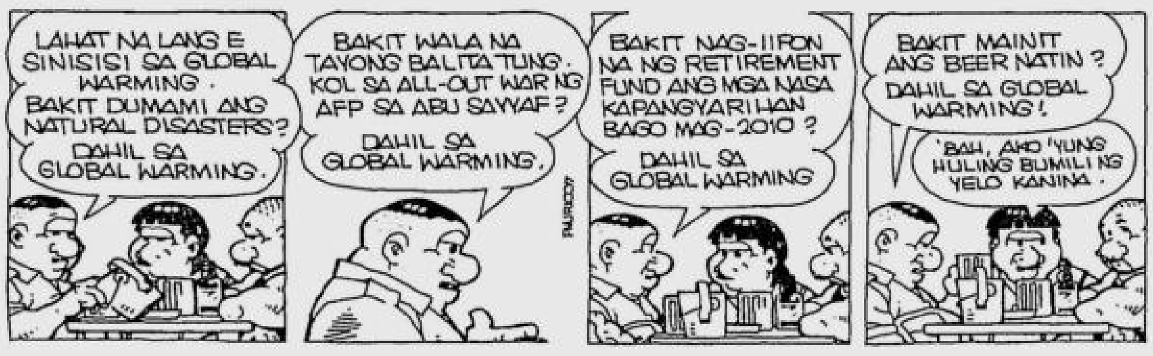
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

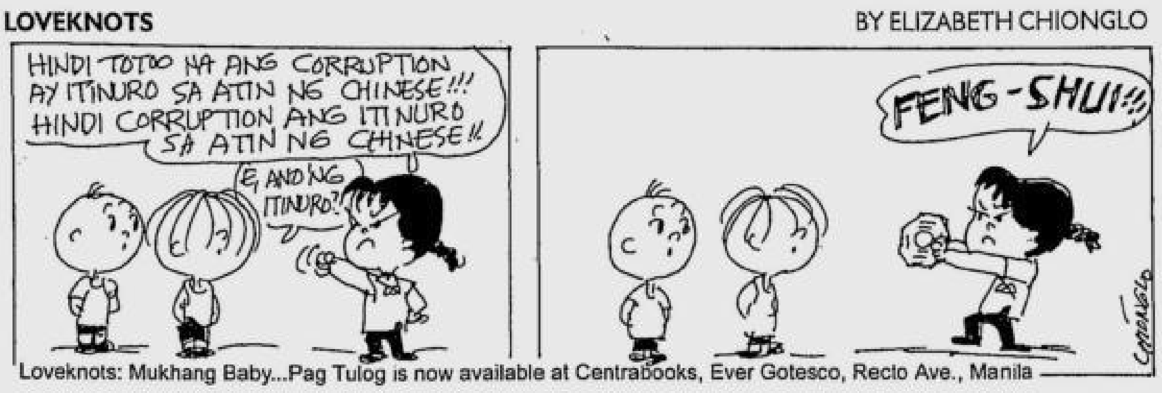
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


CHILDREN ARE THE FIRST VICTIMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION!
FOUNDATION FOR THE PHILIPPINE ENVIRONMENT
MAS GRABE ITONG GRAFT AND CORRUPTION
BAKIT?
KASI PATI MATANDA BIKTIMA NITO!
BA'T KA NAKA TINGIN SA'KIN? E, BATA PA 'KO!

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

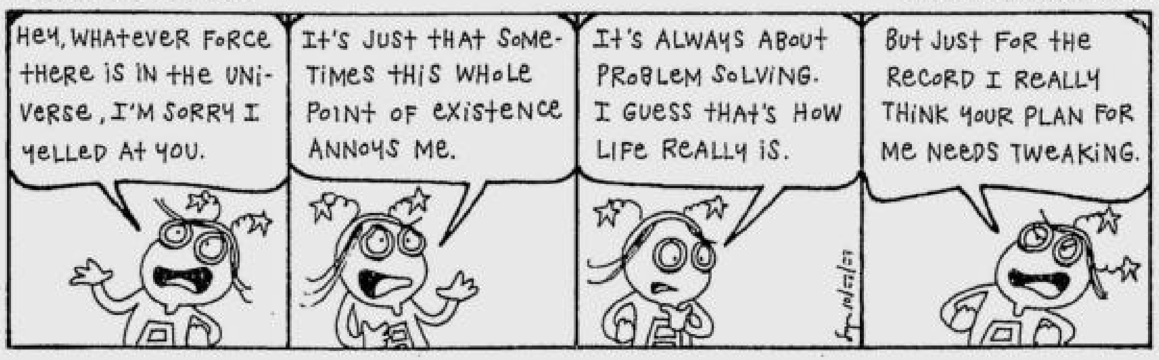

LAHAT NA LANG E SINISISI SA GLOBAL WARMING.
BAKIT DUMAMI ANG NATURAL DISASTERS?
DAHIL SA GLOBAL WARMING.
BAKIT WALA NA TAYONG BALITA TUNGKOL SA ALL-OUT WAR NG AFP SA ABU SAYYAF?
DAHIL SA GLOBAL WARMING.
BAKIT NAG-IIPON NA NG RETIREMENT FUND ANG MGA NASA KAPANGYARIHAN BAGO MAG-2010?
DAHIL SA GLOBAL WARMING
BAKIT MAINIT ANG BEER NATIN?
DAHIL SA GLOBAL WARMING!
'BAH, AKO 'YUNG HULING BUMILI NG YELO KANINA.

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

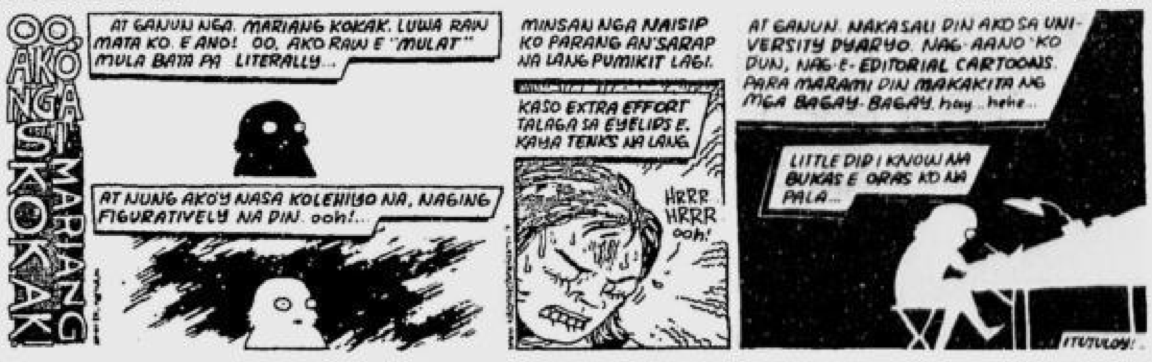

HINDI TOTOO NA ANG CORRUPTION AY ITINURO SA ATIN NG CHINESE!!! HINDI CORRUPTION ANG ITINURO SA ATIN NG CHINESE!!
E, ANO NG ITINURO?
FENG-SHUI!!

Loveknots: Mukhang Baby...Pag Tulog is now available at Centrabooks, Ever Gotesco, Recto Ave., Manila

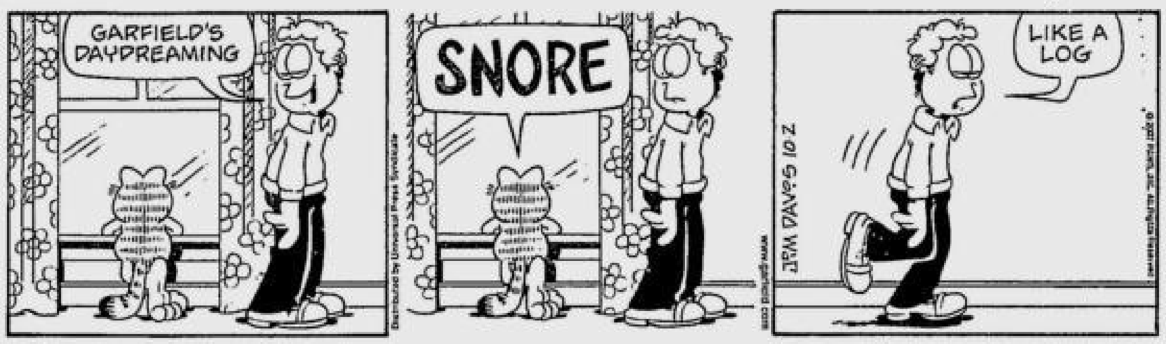
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, whatever force there is in the universe, I'm sorry I yelled at you.
It's just that sometimes this whole point of existence annoys me.
It's always about problem solving. I guess that's how life really is.
But just for the record I really think your plan for me needs tweaking.

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


OO, AKO NGA SI MARIANG KOKAK
AT GANUN NGA. MARIANG KOKAK. LUWA RAW MATA KO. E ANO! OO, AKO RAW E "MULAT" MULA BATA PA LITERALLY...
AT NUNG AKO'Y NASA KOLEHIYO NA, NAGING FIGURATIVELY NA DIN. ooh!...
MINSAN NGA NAISIP KO PARANG AN'SARAP NA LANG PUMIKIT LAGI.
KASO EXTRA EFFORT TALAGA SA EYELIDS E. KAYA TENKS NA LANG.
HRRR HRRR ooh!
AT GANUN. NAKASALI DIN AKO SA UNIVERSITY DYARYO. NAG-AANO 'KO DUN, NAG-E-EDITORIAL CARTOONS. PARA MARAMI DIN MAKAKITA NG MGA BAGAY-BAGAY. hay...hehe...
LITTLE DID I KNOW NA BUKAS E ORAS KO NA PALA...
ITUTULOY!

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS


GARFIELD'S DAYDREAMING
SNORE
LIKE A LOG
JIM DAVIS 10-2

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You love elegant beauty. You have charm and well-developed social skills; plus you're hardworking! Music, architecture, design, singing or the theater all appeal. You work well with others and have strong humanitarian interests. From your mid-20s to early 50s, you're intent on self-discovery. Travel and adventure are important when you're older. An important choice awaits you this year.

Birthdate of: Lorraine Bracco, actress; Sting, musician; Donna Karan, designer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You have strong opinions about something having to do with home, family or real estate today. Remember to remain diplomatic and patient with others. (Don't bark!)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today you could sell anyone anything! Your powers of persuasion are unusually strong. That's because you believe what you're saying. (No one can resist you.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're very hot about some kind of money issue right now. You might be keen to earn money, or you might be equally keen to spend it. Whatever is happening feels quite personal to you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Today the Moon is in your sign, and it's lined up with fiery Mars. You're PowerPoint on steroids! You'll be able to cut through every situation like a hot knife slicing through butter. You rock!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might be doing something very private or even secretive today. (I'll never tell.) You're certainly playing your cards very close to your chest. Hmmm.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Discussions with groups or perhaps a female friend are lively and emotional today. Think before you speak, and try not to overreact if someone says something you don't like.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your ambition is aroused today! You'll be very bold and forthright when talking to bosses, parents, teachers, VIPs or even the police. You care passionately about something.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): There is something you want to know more about. Perhaps it's some kind of education or information you want to get about politics, religion or something related to another country. You'll find what you're looking for.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You have definite opinions about how something should be shared today. And you want to make sure that you are not overlooked!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Discussions with partners and close friends could border on disputes and arguments because you feel so personal about something. You're not going to ignore it. (Stay calm.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're super-keen to get better organized at work or at home today. Great! Roll up your sleeves and get down to it. Capitalize on this urge while you have it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a flirtatious, fun-loving day. Romance is hot and heavy. You'll enjoy sports, a movie or playful times with children.

QUALIBET CRUSADERS. Christine Bersola-Babao with daughter Antonia, Pinky Yee, lawyer Ernest Maceda, Gina de Venecia, Pinky Tobiano, Speaker Jose de Venecia, Sara Soliven-De Guzman, Ambassador Jose E.B. Antonio, Ambassador Ernesto Maceda, lawyer Gigi Martinez (Sen. Loren Legarda's representative) and Dr. Alejandro Dizon (Jose Ledesma's representative)

Tribute to crusaders

WHEN THE EVENING began, there were only 10 Crusaders. By night's end, Qualibet had all its guests sharing in its CEO and founder Pinky Pe Tobiano's vision of a "safer, better Philippines." Indeed, what could be better than a roomful of health and safety crusaders?

Qualibet recently paid tribute to its 10 Crusaders in a capacity-filled event at The Loft at Manansala at the Rockwell Center.

Qualibet's crusaders include Jose G. Ledesma, president and CEO, St. Luke's Medical Center; Pinky T. Yee, marketing director, Goldilocks; House Speaker Jose de Venecia; Sen. Loren B. Legarda; Ambassador Ernesto M. Maceda; Ambassador Jose Eduardo B. Antonio; Sara Soliven-de Guzman, EVP, O.B. Montessori; lawyer Ernest P. Maceda, law dean, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila; Christine Bersola-Babao, parenting advocate; and Gina Vera Perez-de Venecia, founder, Ina Foundation.

Tobiano, a chemist and cancer survivor who established Qualibet in July 2006 to fill a need for world-class food, water, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and veterinary testing facility, lauded the crusaders for taking up the cudgels for her advocacy.

"I am thankful that I am not alone in this advocacy of mine," said Tobiano. "All I'm fighting for is consumer empowerment so the Filipino consumer will be aware of the quality of the water we use, the generic medicines that are being sold, and the nutritional facts about the food out in the market."

House Speaker De Venecia praised Tobiano for her advocacy: "She is fighting for something that has a lasting impact. She is the only one who came up with this crusade. As her adoptive father, I am very proud of her."

Christian Bautista, the Hotlegs and the Company provided the entertainment for the evening.

LESTER Hallig

PEPITO Olarte

AMBASSADOR Ernesto Maceda

ROD Cornejo

BETH Mendoza

LUCIENNE Dy Tioco

TONY Katigbak

BETH Mendoza, Ferdi Salvador and Michelle Peralta

SUZETTE Ayzon

LAWYER Gigi Martinez and Dr. Alejandro Dizon

AWARDEE Ernest Maceda with wife Rica and son Max

CLAUDINE Zialcita and Emily Lopez

ALAN German and Ilocos Sur Governor DV Savellano

RAMON Orlina

FEM Aguila

ROSEMARIE "Baby" Arenas, Hilda Antonio and Ambassador Jose E.B. Antonio

ALGERO Favis, Anya Camacho, Rhiza Romero, Pinky Tobiano, Gigi Leonardo, Ryan Ros Calmante, Hope Lazcano, Jenalyn Collado and Greg Montana

ZHA Tiu, Sunny Chua, Ruby Chua, Pinky Yee and Chin Chua

BIBI Yu, Prescy Meneses and Maridee Chanyungco

Mayan calendar prophecies

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime Licauco

I ASKED THE MEDIUMS OR channels of three spirit entities if the predictions in the Mayan calendar were true.

The responses affirmed the predictions would transpire and humankind better prepare for them.

The following was the answer of Gabbey, the spirit guide of Jun Acquiatan, a professor of business management in Pangasinan. I believe Gabbey is the Archangel Gabriel.

Jun: Jimmy Licauco would like to know if the Mayan calendar prediction that the earth cycle would be finished by Dec. 21, 2012, is accurate.

Gabbey: The end of this cycle is near. Actually, no one knows when this will happen except God himself. The predictions and declarations are approximations. However, there are indicators that the time is near. Usually, the end of a cycle is preceded by great calamities... Many new kinds of calamities, new kinds of wars, and new cultures will come out which are beyond your expectations.

But do not be deceived, as Christ said in the Bible, for new false prophets will emerge. These people are very charismatic and possess special powers that would even surpass the feats shown by Christ.

J: But why should God allow these things to happen? If He loves humankind, He should not allow these to occur. Otherwise, Christ's mission of saving the world would be in vain.

G: These things happen because of man's irresponsibility. Many religious personalities appeared in your world showing the way to righteousness but man has not learned his lessons. The world must be cleansed for a new generation to rectify the misdeeds of the past.

End times?

J: So, are we living now in the end times as mentioned in the Apocalypse of St. John?

G: You must understand my friend that, contrary to what you know, time is relative... in the sense that time as a measurement of duration is dependent on a particular cycle. If you refer to your cycle now, then I would say it is now the beginning of an end of a cycle. But another cycle will come and another time will be set.

J: How many years are there in a cycle?

G: I just told you that time is relative to a cycle. You cannot take the time of one cycle as a standard to measure the duration of another cycle.

Actually, a cycle is a way of expressing the series of related events in the world. But, in the spiritual realm, there is no such thing as a cycle for in the spirit world there is oneness and in eternity, there is no time. But the messengers of God have to make things understandable to man and therefore cycles were created. Seven major cycles are to be attained before the Parousia. You are now in the 5th cycle and that cycle is about to end.

J: What is a Parousia?

G: This is what you call the Second Coming of Christ, which is misunderstood even by the Church.

Parousia

J: So,.what is the correct understanding of Parousia?

G: If you read the Bible, it (says) Christ will come back the way he departed. A literal translation has been made... by Church leaders. The coming back of Christ will not really be the way he departed. Logic will tell you that this is not possible simply because the Second Coming will happen in a different cycle and therefore the world environment at the time will not be the same.

You see... even if Christ will come today, Israel is not the same as... when he was here about 2,000 years ago. So, how can he come back the way he departed?

J: If Christ left the world by ascending into heaven, then he would come back descending from heaven. This is what is taught in catechism.

G: That is not accurate. By ascending you assume that heaven is up beyond the clouds... heaven is not a place but a state of the soul or spirit. It is another dimension which does not need space and time. Going up is only a manifestation of separation from one dimension to another... a soul of a person who just died will also ascend not because it will go to heaven but because the soul, which is now free from the physical laws, especially the law of gravity, will float and enter into another dimension, the spiritual dimension.

J: But... Christ ascended with a physical human body. A soul of a dead person is pure spirit and has no body.

G: Christ at that time had a glorified body. Even the Bible said so. A glorified human body is one where spiritual characteristics are stronger than physical characteristics... The Bible narrated how Christ just appeared in the midst of the apostles out of nowhere. That was a manifestation of a glorified body. So, when Christ went to heaven, which is actually going to the spiritual dimension, he was seen ascending because that is the way of going to another dimension.

J: So, when is the second coming?

G: Only God really knows. What is true is that all seven cycles must be attained first... That is the divine plan. But how soon it will come, no one knows except God.

For inquiries on Inner Mind Development, ESP and Intuition Development, and Soulmates, Karma & Reincarnation conducted by this writer, call 8107245. 8926806; fax 8159890; e-mail innerawareness_2005@yahoo.com.ph.

THE BASILIO CLAN: Paolo B. Antonio, the hostess Nonie B., Ina B. Antonio, the celebrator, Bert, and Felix Basilio III; (standing) Brian Antonio, Rowena B. Antonio, Irene Basilio, Gay Basilio, Martin B. Tan, Princess Basilio and Edwin Basilio

BABY Antonio, Kim Lokin, Tessie Rodrigo, Linda Cruz and Chit Bautista

GERRY Contreras

ALICE Briones, Helen Ong and Letty Syquia

NOEL Gonzales and Pitang Tiongson singing for the celebrator

Birthday party will help build town's cultural center

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

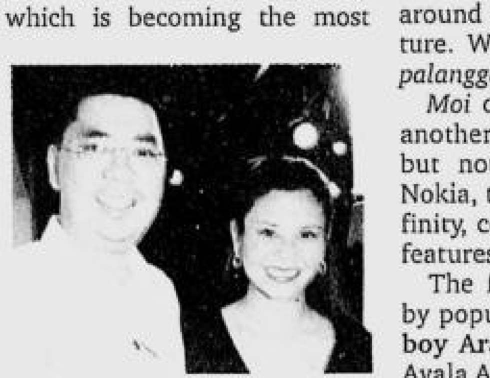
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

MIGUEL Zubiri and his wife Anna Garcia with Smart's smartest gal, Jullie Carceller

LARRY and Tanini de Leon with Rica Camacho

JOHN Chan, Bubut and Paulie de los Santos

ITO Curata, Robert Miller and Marissa Garcia



LITO and Tisa Santos

CIVIC-MINDED **BERT Basilio** turned his super, well-attended 75th birthday bash into a fund-raising affair for the "improvement and beautification of the town plaza of Peñaranda, Nueva Ecija," hometown of his wife, old-wealth socialite **Nonie Tan**.

In lieu of gifts, he requested his invitees to donate to the Peñaranda Civic and Cultural Foundation that is spearheading the conversion of the town plaza into a proper venue for civic, social and cultural affairs, *palanggas*.

On behalf of the celebrator, fashion-plate Nonie thanked all the guests from the Rotary, Inner Wheel, Zonta and Catholic Women's clubs, and the Friends of the Cultural Concerns of the Philippines (FCCP) for their donations and assured them that proceeds would be used solely for the project.

By the time *moi* breezed into the North Forbes Pavilion, which is becoming the most popular place for receptions and events, the place was packed, dahlings.

The dinner-dance then got rolling with fun musical numbers by close pals **Pitang Tiongson**, **Noel Gonzales**, and **Eimee Cragun** and, a special gift from friend **Esther Vibal**, a performance by tenor **Jonathan Badon**, no less.

It was followed by ballroom dancing, sending the social set rocking and rolling on the dance floor.

Truly a fun birthday for a worthy cause, *palangga*.

User-friendly

Nokia celebrated the fabulous, so-friendly-and-easy-to-use new Nokia N95, *palanggas*. Indeed it was a cause for celebration as this model gives you a multimedia computer, a media player, 5-megapixel camera, MP3 player and GPS device. It can access e-mail, surf the Internet, download movies, upload photos to Flickr, and even, would you believe, help you find your way around town with the GPS feature. Wow is all *moi* can say, *palanggas*.

Moi dashed in late-ish from another happening, dahlings, but not too late to witness Nokia, together with Smart Infinity, celebrating the amazing features of the Nokia N95.

The fun dinner was hosted by popular businessman **Bomboy Araneta** at his sprawling Ayala Alabang residence. In attendance were Smart's hottest executives, like Smart and PLDT president **Napoleon Nazareno**; Smart's smartest gal, Infinity Business group head, beauty and brain **Jullie Carceller**; and Nokia account manager for Smart **Cristina Trinidad**.

The safari-theme dinner catered by Bellevue hotel, no less, had the most huge garden looking like a jungle with tons of flower arrangements everywhere you looked.

The program was, as always, excellently hosted by "my ex future pal" **Johnny Litton**, and for the extra dash of client.

The fantastic, one-of-a-kind singer **Verni Varga** entertained the audience with her admirable vocal range by performing several hot jazz numbers that kept the chi-chi chosen ones on the edge of their seats and clamoring for more, more, more! She graciously obliged, *palanggas*.

Having a great time were Nokia's **Sandeep Khanna** and **Siegfried Karlsson**; designer **Christian Espiritu**; **Mon** and **Meg Tapales**, on a rare night out; **Jun** and **Cheding Arroyo**; and **Jean Marie Syjuco**, plus so many others like them.

Like the new Nokia N95, Verni V. gave a smashingly successful performance, dahlings.

Manila's loveliest

Hey, it is only two months away from Christmas and we will be seeing several eye-catching faces, five to be exact, *palanggas*.

Who are they? Well, the Love 14 Foundation has announced Manila's Five Loveliest 2008. Now on its 19th year, the search is a major annual project of the foundation "that aims to raise funds for its various charity projects."

The five pretty-pretty young gals were named during the Meeting with the Parents hosted by **Jenny Napoles**, president of the foundation, at the Pacific Plaza function hall.

Carla Rosanna Aranaz, **Cristina Afzelius**, **Marie Veronique Dayrit Boncan**, **Jean Salonga Fernando** and **Jeane Catherine Lim Napoles** entered as their parents **José** and **Becky Aranaz**; **Edwin** and **Carmen Afzelius**; **Marcelo** and **Jacqui Boncan**; engineer **Jesus** and **Elizabeth Fernando**; and **Jaime** and **Jenny Napoles** beamed with pride, dahlings.

"The proclamation of Manila's Five Loveliest rekindles the commitment of Love 14 Foundation to the community, its dedication and determination to serve and to fulfill its mission of love. The foundation continues to make contributions in the delivery of health and social services, especially education, through its scholarship grants," explained dedicated chair **Nini Licaros**, no less, dahlings.

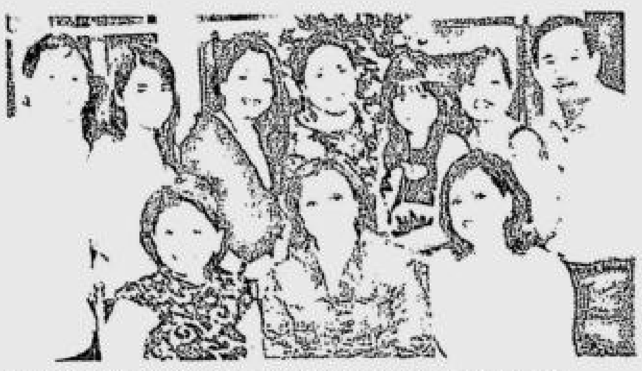
Mark the date, *palanggas*, Oct. 17, at the Rizal Grand Ballroom, Makati Shangri-La Hotel, the start of the five pretty-pretty gals' year of fame.

AMBASSADOR Victor Garcia and his wife, vivacious Connie G.

PITOY Moreno and Joel Cruz

SOL Lavadia and Tess Castro

MANILA'S Five Loveliest 2008: Marie Veronique Boncan, Jean Fernando, Rosanna Aranaz, Jeane Catherine Napoles and Cristina Afzelius



LOVE 14 Foundation officers and members: Donnie Ramirez, Rona Vergel de Dios, Celia Cuasay, Virma Vergel de Dios, Yolly Ayson, Joanne Matschuck, Contreras; (seated) Nini Valdez, Jenny Napoles and Nini Licaros

MANILA'S Five Loveliest 2007: Jill Bunaquen, Charisse Abalos, Mila Zamora, Ysa Villar and Chinna Juban

SMART'S Polly Nazareno flanked by Nokia's Sandeep Khanna and Siegfried Karlsson

SULTRY songstress Verni Varga kept the invitees on the edge of their seats.

JUN and Cely Manas

GINA Bernasconi Tuason with host Bomboy, Vanessa and David Araneta

---

Weight-loss story can win trip to HK

IF YOU ARE A SUCCESSFUL Xando Block and Burn user, tell your story in Goodbye Flab, Hello Fab promo.

A joint project of Xando and Mega magazine, it is open to all Xando users with a successful weight-loss story to tell. Focus on how the dietary supplement helped you achieve your ideal weight.

Send your entry to Xando. It should be accompanied by full-body before and after (using Xando) photos. Include name, age, address, contact numbers and the original tape receipt of a Xando Block and Burn product purchased Sept. 1-Nov. 30.

Deadline for submission is Nov. 30.

Entries must be mailed to Perfectaire Inc., Unit 3A City Center Building, Ortigas Ave. Greenhills, San Juan City.

The panel of judges is composed of representatives from Xando marketing group and Mega magazine. Entries will be judged on editorial content (60 percent) and the sender's overall appeal before and after taking Xando Block and Burn (40 percent).

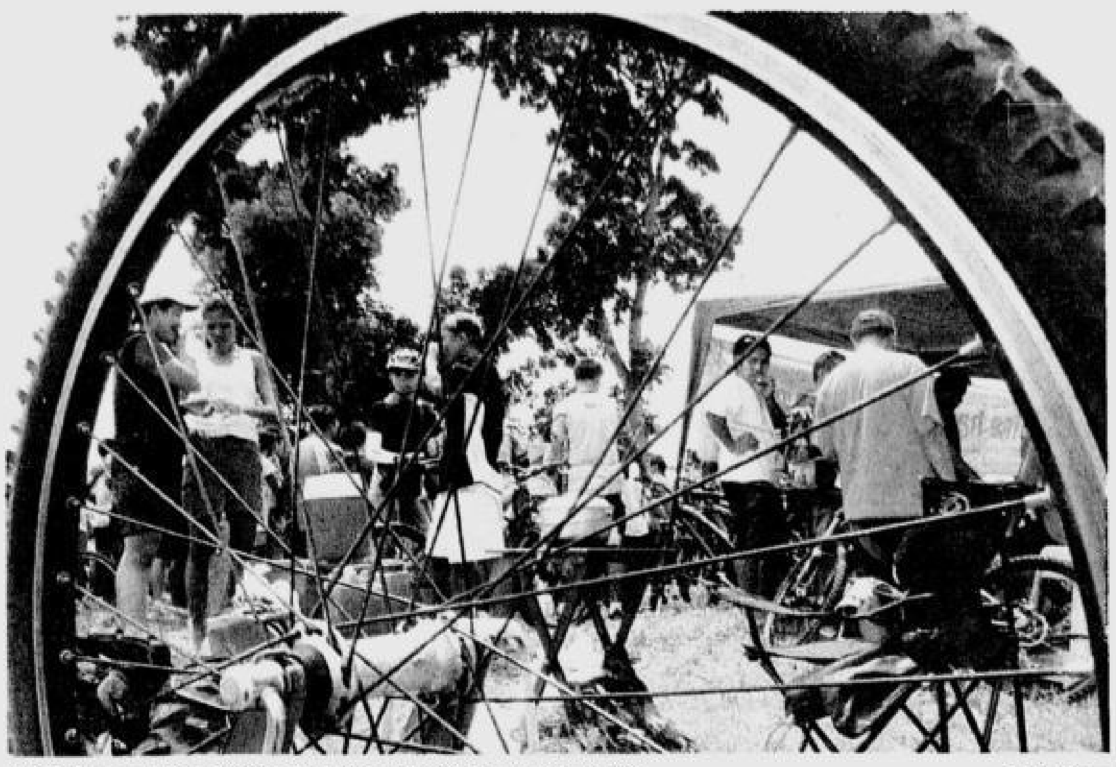
Winner wins a three-day, two-night trip to Hong Kong for two (package covers airfare, hotel accommodation and US$1,000 pocket money), Xando gift products, a one-year Mega magazine subscription, and a makeover and pictorial feature for its February issue.

Non-winners can join the raffle promo on Dec. 10 at the Perfectaire head office. Prizes include iPod Nanos, Nokia 6070s, Xando gift packs and Mega magazine subscriptions.

Wrinkle Treatments

HEALTHY eating tips and Botox treatment and alternative remedies to smooth out facial lines are featured in the special September-October issue of the Healthy Options Lifestyle News Digest. As part of ushering in its 12th anniversary, the digest shares a centerspread on the opening of new Healthy Options stores at TriNoma in QC and at SM City Davao. The issue also offers stories on sex after cancer treatment and the psychological hurdles young girls with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) face, as well as an anti-aging quiz. Copies of the latest Healthy Options Lifestyle News Digest are free with purchase at all Healthy Options stores in major malls in Metro Manila, Clark in Pampanga; Sta. Rosa, Laguna; Cebu and Davao. Visit the Healthy Options website www.healthyoptions.com.ph.

DON'T PANIC. Heart-stopping sudden drop-offs, not for the faint-hearted



MORE than 200 participants joined the 24-hour mountain-bike endurance race.

A biker's life—sort of

From page C1

INQUIRER's finest gentlemen.

Sponsored for the first time by the Department of Tourism, the race was held at the National Bilibid Prisons Minimum Security Land Reserve in Muntinlupa on a 6-km circuit. Cosponsored by PMI Colleges, Rush Fitness Water, the City of Muntinlupa and the National Bilibid Prisons, the tournament required riders to finish a minimum of 15 laps each, whether in a relay team of three or as solo racers, within a span of 24 hours.

The tournament was open to amateur and elite riders whose mountain biking skills were put to the test as the route included steep descents/ascents, tricky single tracks, heart-stopping sudden drop-offs and a "bonus" rough ride through a construction site on uneven dirt of loose sand and soft earth that, as soon as temperature dropped by evening, instantly turned to a slippery mix of mud and slush.

GIRL POWER. Women showed they, too, can rough it up when the going gets tough.

TIPPING POINT. As the race neared its end, this biker falls to the ground in full display of good sportsmanship.

Excited first-timer

For first-timers like me and my teammates, it was the sheer promise of fun and adventure that lured us into the race. And as many of us quickly found out, the challenge was really about how far you could push yourself for 24 hours and overcome unpredictable obstacles thrown your way—scorching sun and cold darkness not included. (Save for the teeny light from your head and bike lamps, you had to ride in complete darkness during nightfall. Could be creepy, depending on how you interpret it. But let's get to that later.)

The first few times I biffed I counted with ease, but after being knocked off my bike one too many times I lost track. Well, there was the one time when, during a rude ascent that sent my bike rocketing toward the sky, I lost my balance, fell on my back and rattled my brain (granting, of course, that I still had one after several jarring moments).

Another memorable one happened way past midnight when a huge toad—I had never seen one this big before—jumped right in front of me and I fell on my side, the pedal hitting my ankle hard.

Ouch! Oh. My. God. That hurt so much it was my one moment of I-wanna-go-home-and-take-a-long-warm-bath-right-now. I stifled a cry, seriously, and for the first time wondered what on earth I was doing with my life. I was tired, sweating and shivering. I hadn't slept and showered. My body ached for the comforts of home. I missed my bed, my pillows, my dog, the kitchen, the bathroom. Heck I even missed the doormat! Anywhere but here, please.

But since it was pitch dark, adrenaline shot up my veins as I scrambled up on my feet, propelled by fear of what nocturnal creatures might come walking, jumping, flying or slithering across my line of vision. Because save for the metallic grinds of chains against sprockets, of crank arms being pushed and pulled by my feet, of gears shifting and of my own heavy breathing (I have two types of heart condition, by the way—mitral valve prolapse and rheumatic heart disease/mitral stenosis), the evening was veiled with unfamiliar sounds that thumped, thudded, hummed, swished, and those that went "psst."

Sure, there were the crickets and those that go "*kokak*," but that was about it as far as familiar noises were concerned. (I later learned some racers encountered snakes along the tracks, with a few saying they actually saw cobras.)

Know thyself

In those 24 hours I learned a great deal about myself, my capacity to think clear under severe physical and mental pressure, my aptitude to look after my team despite my own needs and truly embrace the spirit of camaraderie.

COME HELL OR HIGH WATER. Despite the scorching heat and sleepless night, INQUIRER's Aries Espinosa gives it his all.

The endurance tested was both mine and my bike's. But none felt that test of gear more than Benjie Labay. He was in INQUIRER's all-male team with audit's Raffy Esturas and Cycad president (Cycling Advocate Adventure) Monchie Garcia. The hammer among us, Labay took in three flat tires, two of them just minutes apart. When his saddle post broke in the middle of the trail, he carried his saddle in one hand and continued to pedal his way standing up until he finished his lap! He never once gave up on himself.

Indeed, your ultimate rival becomes yourself, not the rider next to you. For it is you, and you alone, who decides whether to give it your all despite time restrictions, or concede defeat, give up when you could have done more.

Commit or quit. In the end, I found out that I was, in fact, very much into commitment.

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

Running a marathon is not mission impossible

By Mitch Felipe
Contributor

RUNNING IS NOT JUST FOR A select few. Even an ordinary person can progress from walking to joining marathons.

Running is a goal-oriented activity that tests your physical and mental skills. Whichever training speed and distance you are at right now, there are numerous benefits and results that you can get out of running. You just need to experience each phase with patience and discipline.

If you are overweight, you need to shed excess weight first. You should have a medical clearance from your physician before you can start running. The clearance will depend on your fitness level and other medical conditions.

Your progression starts with brisk walking, walk/jog intervals, jogging, running. The American Council on Exercise defines jogging as "slower running."

It is not necessary to progress to running if desired goals can be achieved by jogging.

Start and end the jog or run by brisk-walking for 5-8 minutes then perform some stretches. Drink water before, during (every 15 minutes), and after the run. Consume sports drinks if you exercise for more than 90 minutes. Eat some form of carbohydrate within a couple of hours after.

Burning calories

Running effectively burns calories and improves endurance.

William McArdle, Victor and Frank Katch, authors of "Exercise Physiology: Energy, Nutrition, and Human Performance," explained that when running on a flat surface, the energy cost per kilogram of body mass per kilometer traveled averaged one kilocalorie.

Thus, the net energy cost of running one kilometer for individuals weighing 78 kg averages 78 kcal, regardless of running speed. A 60-kg person requires about 600 calories (60 kg x 10 km) to cover a 10-km distance regardless of whether the run takes 45, 60 or 120 minutes.

To burn fat effectively, you need to do it for at least 30 minutes at 50-70 percent of your maximum heart rate (220-age, the formula used to get a person's maximum heart rate—220 is constant and the answer will depend on a person's age). A 40-year-old person should exercise at 90-126 bpm or beats per minute (50-70 percent of maximum heart rate is 180 bpm). You can detect your heart rate by counting your pulse for one minute or using a heart rate monitor.

Use the recommended heart rate range as the basis for increasing speed or level of treadmill inclination (grade). You can either adjust the speed while keeping the grade constant or adjust the grade but maintain the speed.

As you train consistently, your endurance will improve and you will notice that you need to increase either your speed or grade just to reach your target heart rate.

Weight management

Running can help you manage your weight. It is effective for faster weight loss provided that you are cleared of orthopedic conditions. It increases your calorie-burning rate during and after the run.

Weight-loss results are not immediate. During the initial training phase, your body develops more lean mass (this is directly proportional to metabolism). It is a weight-bearing activity. If you sustain the training, cumulative results are noticeable.

If you want to have a well-defined lower body, then jogging or running is a good choice. However, it is still recommended to cross-train with other cardio activities like cycling, using cross-training machines.

Do not forget to incorporate weight training at least twice a week.

The sport also gives your exercise activities a purpose, important for long-term health and weight management. You will become more motivated in doing exercises like strength and flexibility training since you know its purpose in relation to your running performance goals.

Healthy living

Running encourages you to live a healthy lifestyle.

You learn how to eat for performance and you forget about unhealthy eating habits like eliminating complex carbohydrates from your diet. Your body will demand more carbohydrates like pasta, rice or bread, which will help you sustain and increase your running speed and duration.

It also reminds you to drink more water and sleep more than six hours to maximize training performance.

Running improves your mood, gives you a sense of accomplishment and promotes self-discipline. You have to set training days to experience significant results.

Possibilities

Running lets you explore more possibilities. You learn from the experience itself and improve your skills by asking running experts or doing more research on the sport.

As you progress, you can consider joining 5-km, 10-km and 21-km races. There are some upcoming running events (Yakult 10-Miler Run, Milo National Finals, New Balance Run) starting November.

You can realistically think of joining your first full marathon (42-km) in the near future. Ideally, you should spend at least six months in training. The duration will vary depending on your fitness level at present.

Your initial goal should be to finish the race and not to compete.

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

What pains you?

IT IS A RACE. AND IT BECOMES COMPLICATED with the passage of time.

Human history is the best example of this race. While life was lived simply before, with progress and technology the human condition has become more complex.

The word "urgency" was introduced—the need to do things faster, to get to where we want to go sooner. And so, as humans rush to work, to meet deadlines, to reach targets, life has become for everyone literally a human race.

Painfully late

If you wake up in the middle of the night with chest pains, you will be rushed to the hospital. If you find yourself spacing out in the middle of the skyway while driving, it is time to see your therapist. If a persistent pain radiating from your spine compromises your mobility, it is time to visit your chiropractor.

But why wait to feel pain before you seek medical help? Let us try to understand some of the pains of the body and the mind today.

In layman's terms, if you feel pain, your brain is sending signals that there is some part of your body that needs attention. If you ignore it, you are not interested in your health. Lacking time only means your health is low in your priority list.

In his book "In Fitness and in Health," Dr. Philip Maffetone describes disease as simply an imbalance in the body, more specifically "a gross imbalance of normal body function... the end result of dysfunction expressed by signs and symptoms of something in the body that has gone wrong."

Would it be considered suicidal to ignore a body signal like pain? You know the answer to that. Ignore the signal, ignore your health.

Build your pyramid

Maffetone said the universal pyramid of food groups was just a guide. You can build your own depending on your lifestyle needs.

He recommends, in this order, water as the base of the pyramid (this you should take more often), vegetables (5-6 servings, cooked/raw, daily), complex carbohydrates, proteins and healthy fats, refined carbo (breads, rolls, sweets, refined flour).

Pain watch

Anti-inflammatory foods should be high on your list such as sardines, mackerel kale, mustard greens, spinach, *ampalaya*, any green leafy vegetables, sprouts (bean, alfalfa, radish).

Make it a point to have a salad a day. This is a great start.

Migraine, headaches

Before taking that aspirin, drink two to three glasses of purified water and wait. You may just be dehydrated. See your doctor if pain persists. Try making it a habit to drink calming teas—chamomile, St. John's Wort, peppermint.

Backaches. Check your posture. Chances are you have been abusing your spine. Drink plenty of water (your kidney might be dehydrated).

Gout/arthritis. Being overweight can be a problem. Try to lose weight. Have a healthy meal plan. Do moderate exercise. Walk for better health. Try medication that will not cause side effects, like Celadrin Glucosamine Complex (Healthy Options).

Menstrual pain. Try to relax. Sip a cup of hot ginger tea for its antispasmodic effects. Raise your feet. Try a warm bath with lavender oil. Place a heating pad on your lower back and abdomen. Take an herbal supplement like evening primrose. Increase your B vitamin, zinc, calcium intake through nutritious foods such as seafood, eggs, veggies.

Muscle cramps/strain. Overworked muscles deserve a good stretch. Space your routine to every other day. Bad posture can cause muscles to stiffen. So be conscious of the way you sit or stand. Increase your magnesium, calcium and potassium intake. You may have mineral depletion.

Natural health

Studies have shown that when you are in pain, worrying about it can cause greater stress and inevitably increase the pain.

"Taking a pain killer," Dr. Martin Camara of Intercare says, "will only cover up the pain and not its root cause."'

Try these instead:

- Relaxation therapy like yoga
- Mind therapy classes that teach meditation
- Chiropractic care (at Intercare, tel. 8903378-79), massage, manipulation, ultrasound and acupuncture can alleviate chronic pain)

Heartache

The best cures for a broken heart are:

1. A serving of dark chocolates. Seriously, it boosts your serotonin levels thus producing relaxation. A glass of red wine (shiraz, merlot, margaux...)

2. Exercise like dancing, swimming, running, jogging, body-combat classes, brisk-walking. It releases endorphins, your feel-good hormones.

3. Laughter. It has the same relaxing effect. Watch funny movies.

4. Company of loving friends

5. Prayer and praise music

As tenor George Yang, chair of McDonalds Philippines says: "Sing a happy tune to drive the blues away."

Affirm with a song from the musical "Annie":

"When I'm stuck with a day that's gray and lonely, I just stick out my chin and grin and say, 'Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love you tomorrow, you're only a day away.'"

Love and light!

Setting a record to make a point

Oct. 20 is World Osteoporosis Day and Filipino women are celebrating it by trying to dance their way into the Guinness book

By Linda B. Bolido

ON OCT. 20, AT THE Cultural Center of the Philippines complex, Filipinos will attempt yet again to set a world record to get into the Guinness Book of World Records.

Organized by Anlene, a high-calcium milk specially formulated for adults particularly women, the event hopes to gather some 10,000 participants in a dance movement.

But the exercise is more than just a meaningless display to bring international attention to the Philippines. Oct. 20 also happens to be World Osteoporosis Day.

The dance exhibition is actually designed to bring attention to the problem also known as brittle bones, a disorder that makes women vulnerable to fractures that can cause permanent disability, even death.

Dr. Leilani Mercado-Asis, vice president of the Osteoporosis Society of the Philippines Foundation Inc. (OSPFI), also pointed out that aside from the physical effects, osteoporosis affected people's mental health.

With their quality of life adversely affected, many people with the disorder become depressed.

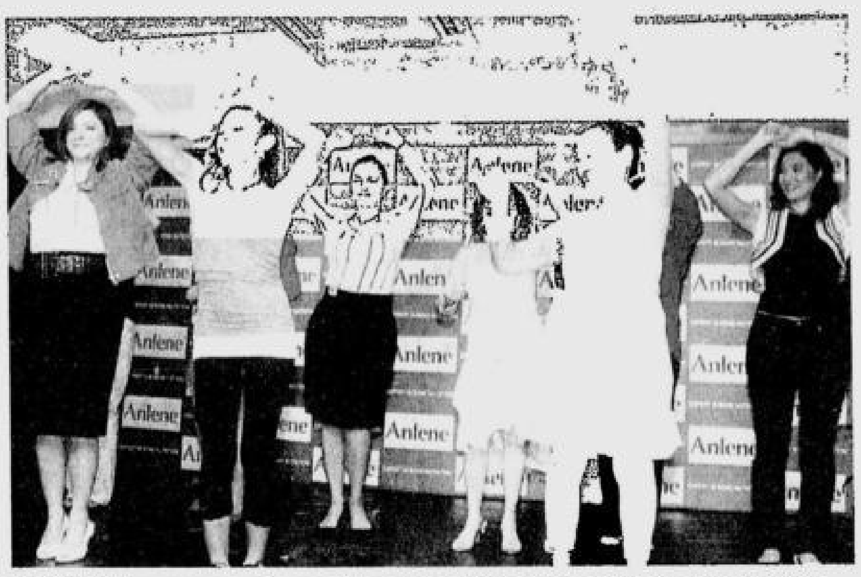
Osteoporosis, characterized by loss of normal bone density, usually manifests itself when women reach the menopausal stage. But the problem could have its underpinnings years before that.

Silent disease

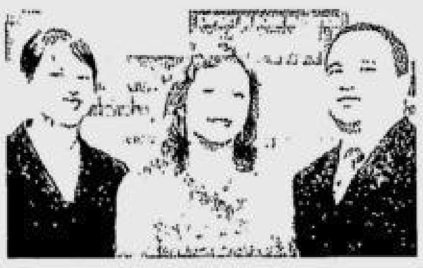
Although the disorder is serious, it can remain undetected for years until a fracture has occurred, hence, it has been called a silent disease.

Up to a certain age in adulthood, bone density develops. Bone specialists say bone-density development for Filipino women stops more or less at age 26.

Genetics has a role in making women more vulnerable to osteoporosis but even people who are genetically predisposed to the disorder can make themselves less vulnerable through proper nutrition and by avoiding certain risk factors.



THE 7 Anlene women demonstrate the Anlene dance with choreographer Nancy Crowe



ANLENE marketing manager Ming Arroyo, host Chique Hollmann-Yulo and Fonterra general manager Carlo Mendoza

As with many other diseases, osteoporosis is affected by a person's lifestyle. To prevent the disease or to keep it from worsening, smoking has to stop and alcohol use moderated. Diet has to improve, with more calcium and vitamin D added. Exercise also has to be added to the equation.

Calcium reserves

Drinking milk is an easy, convenient way to stock up on calcium. By drinking milk, women can ensure they have sufficient calcium reserves for the menopausal stage when hormonal changes threaten to thin their bones.

Dr. Asis said: "By drinking milk and acquiring healthy habits, you can strengthen your bones over time and rely on that strength when the time comes (around mid-40s to early 50s, onset of menopause).

"It works like a bank account. The more you save, the more you have, and the more you can depend on... If you have strong bones and have a lot of calcium savings in your bones, even if your estrogen goes down, the bone thinning during the menopausal stage won't hit the fracture risk level."

The new Anlene, already the No. 1 adult milk brand in the Philippines and Asia, gives people, particularly women, more reason to drink up.

It has recently added Phyto K Regenerative Formula to its milk. Anlene tries to preserve bone strength through a three-step process:

1. It provides essential bone nutrients to build dense and strong bones.

2. It ensures rapid absorption through vitamin D fortification.

3. It locks in nutrients with the revolutionary Phyto K that works deeply to activate proteins in the bones that lock in calcium.

To promote the Oct. 20 dance movement and milk-drinking in general as an effective way to prevent osteoporosis, Anlene has gathered a formidable group of endorsers—actress Dina Bonnevie, Asia's Queen of Songs Pilita Corrales, award-winning fitness aficionado Jackie Lou Blanco, dance diva Becky Garcia, former Miss Universe Margie Moran, swimming champion and television personality Akiko Thomson, and pastor/ballet dancer Rosita Gomez.

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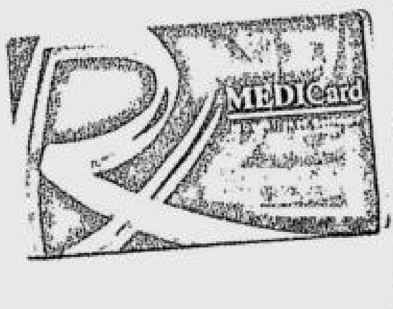
What is Newborn screening?

Many parents agree to do Newborn Screening without fully understanding the benefits of the screening program. I remember a mother of my patient asked me how come her baby had "pneumonia" despite of a normal result of the screening test. So let me explain to you what are the specific disorders included in this screening program and what's the importance of having your baby screened? Newborn Screening is a simple procedure to detect Congenital Metabolic Disorders that may lead to severe mental retardation and even death if left untreated. In the Philippine Newborn Screening program, there are five metabolic disorders screened by the program. These are Congenital Hypothyroidism, Galactosemia, Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia, Phenylketonuria, and Glucose-6-Phosphate-Dehydrogenase (G6PD) deficiency. Any of these 5 disorders when present in your baby may lead to mental retardation or death if no early intervention is done. Newborn Screening is ideally done on the 48th hour of life by getting a blood sample through heel prick method and blotted on a special filter paper. Results will be available after 2 weeks from the time it was collected. A "negative" screen means that the screening result is normal and a " positive" screen means that the newborn must be referred to Newborn Screening Center for confirmatory testing. Let us help save the lives of babies affected with these disorders by subjecting all newborns to the screening program.



Our Accredited Pediatrician in Tarlac, Dr. Angelito Lo, enlightens us regarding Newborn screening. Dr. Lo, a Summa Cum Laude in BS Biology of Far Eastern University, obtained his medical degree at St. Luke's College of Medicine where he was a Dean's Lister from 1996-2001. He later took his residency training for Pediatrics in the same institution and became an affiliated consultant in the hospital. He is a member of the Philippine Pediatric Society and the Pasig Medical Society. Dr. Lo loves to travel, that is why he spends his free time exploring the islands of the Philippines or taking a vacation abroad. MEDICard members may seek for his consultations at Jecsons Medical Center from Thursday to Friday 10 to 4 in the afternoon.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

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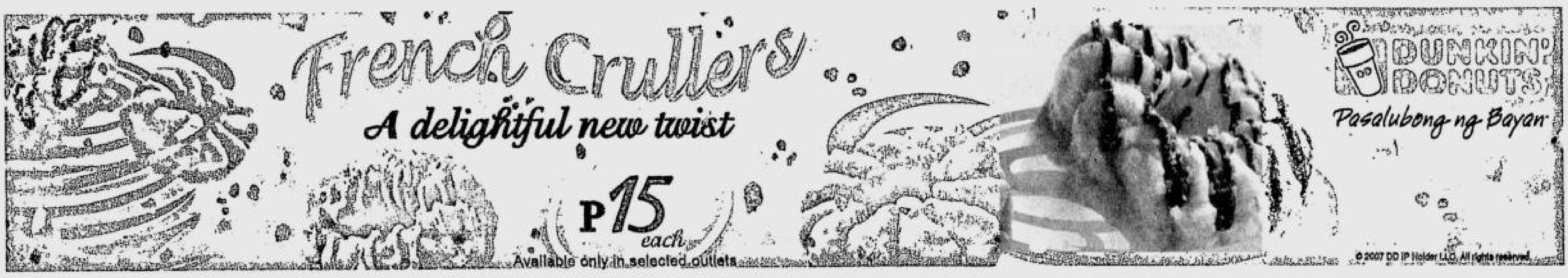

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Kim Chiu's one wish

By Marinel R. Cruz

"PINOY BIG BROTHER TEEN EDITION" winner Kim Chiu said her one wish is to watch her launching movie, Star Cinema's "I've Fallen For You," with her mother, whom she has not seen since she was 9.

"If and when we finally get to talk, I will ask her why she left and what took her so long to come back," Kim said over lunch with the entertainment press last week.

Kim, 17, said she has stopped looking for her mom. "It's up to her now ... she knows where to find me."

In "I've Fallen For You," Kim stars with PBB Teen housemate Gerald Anderson, a rumored suitor.

TAKE FIVE

What's keeping you from getting together?

G: I'm ready for a new relationship, but Kim isn't. I respect that.

Do you think people will like "I've Fallen For You" better than your first movie, "First Day High?"

K: We're nervous. Gerald and I play the leads here. We're very thankful to our Kimerald fans group. Those based here promised to fly to Cebu—where Kim is based—to watch the premiere night there.

Who will shoulder their airfare?

K: They will. They've always been like that. They go to our mall shows and hand out "I've Fallen For You" flyers that they paid for with their own money. They bought a slot for Gerald and me on Pinoy Exchange and rented a roving billboard for a month for us.

G: When we taped some scenes in Cebu, they flew over. And they always bring us food.

Kim, you said people close to you will watch the Cebu premiere. Does this include your ex?

K: I didn't send him an invitation (laughs).

At one point, you were movie fans yourselves. Who were your favorite actors?

G: The first Pinoy films I watched when I arrived in the country were "D Anothers" and those starring John Lloyd Cruz and Bea Alonzo. The first time I worked with them, I was starstruck.

K: I like John Lloyd-Bea movies, too. I also like Heart Evangelista.

G: We were also awed by the senior stars in this film, like Tito Albert (Martinez) and Chin-Chin (Gutierrez). They helped us a lot, giving us tips and boosting our confidence.

K: I made sure I memorized all my lines when I had scenes with Ms Lotlot (De Leon). *Nahihiya kasi ako sa kanya.*

Can you share some experiences while filming?

G: We traveled a lot. Unlike in "First Day High" which was shot mostly in a school campus, we filmed this one in different beautiful places.

How was Lino Cayetano as director?

G: He's like our *barkada*. He eats with us during breaks. But at work, he's focused and dedicated.

K: At first, I was nervous to be around him. *Galit s'ya sa maingay*. I eventually warmed up to him.

KIM Chiu and Gerald Anderson play lead stars in the movie "I've Fallen For You."

'Tribu' boys take cool trip

BAGUIO CITY—THE TONDO gangsters who won Best Actor honors at the 2007 Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival were mere spectators as Baguio artists banged their drums and beat their gongs here last week.

"*Ang lamig dito* (It's cold here)," was all Lloyd Labastida could say.

Then they warmed up to the *pattong* (welcome gong dance), dancing with the artists. A few moments later, they were freestyle-rapping.

"*O ang lamig dito sa* Baguio,

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RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION R13 1:50,4:00,6:10. 8:20,10:30	I ' VE FALLEN FOR YOU G 1:30,3:40,5:50,8:00	SHOOT 'EM UP R13 2:00,4:00

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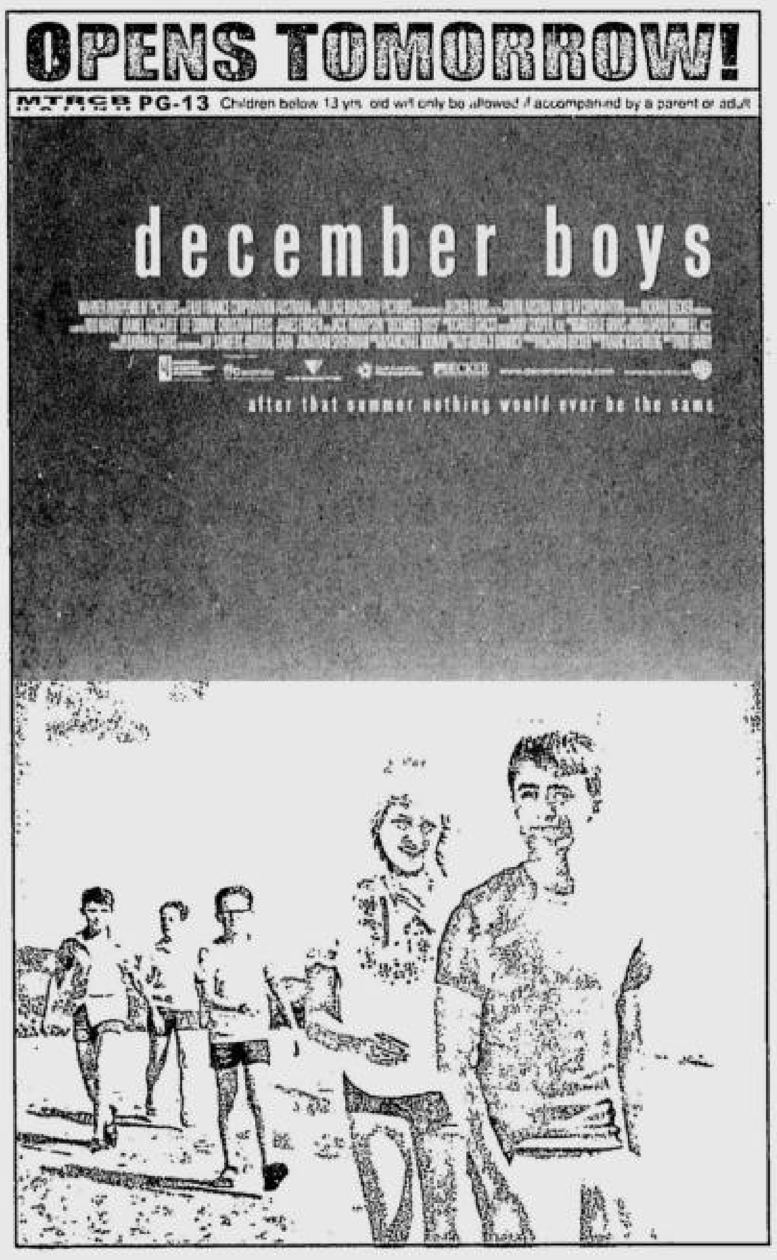

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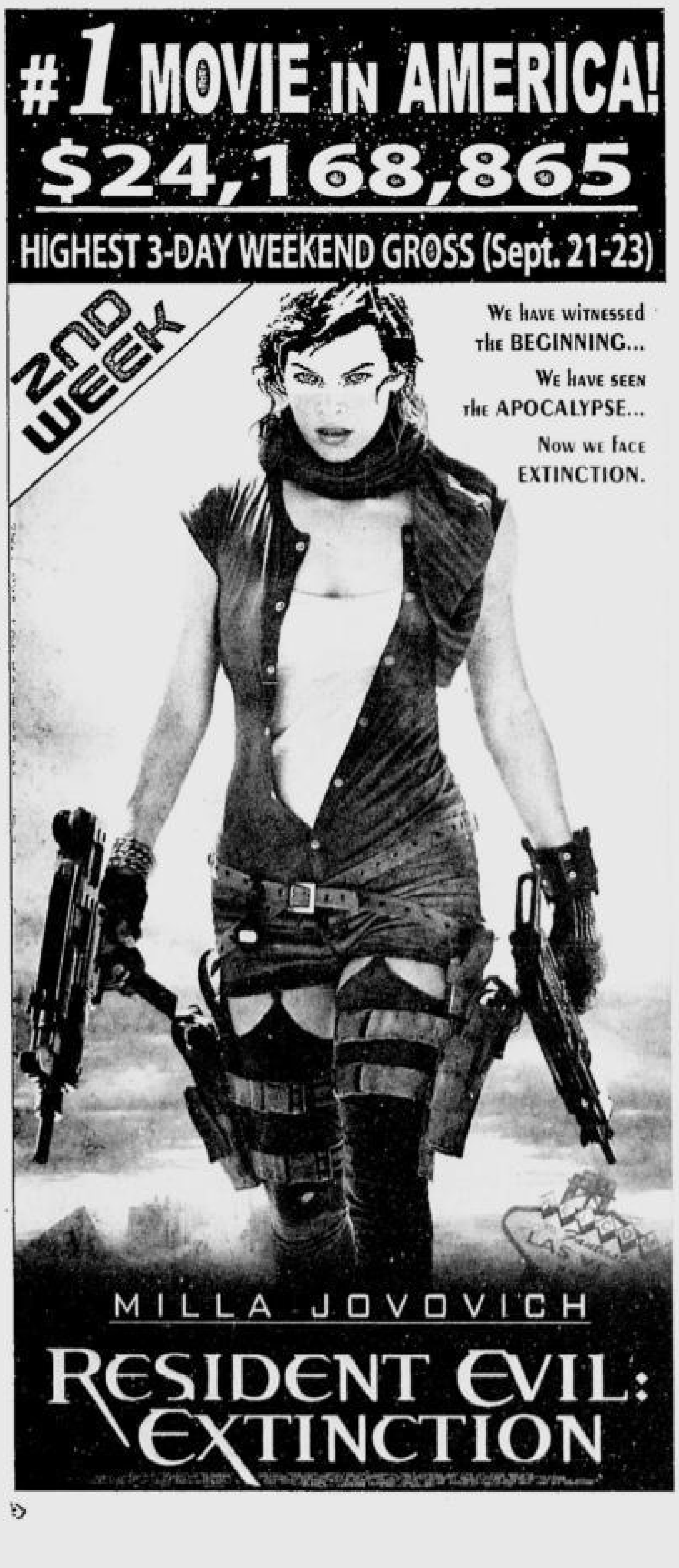

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For men who want to lose that bulging and unsightly belly quickly and easily, now there is a solution! Plastic surgeons have invented a machine that can "melt away" stubborn tummy fat in a patient's lunchbreak – **ULTRASHAPE**. This treatment gets rid of unwanted bulges and, unlike liposuction, does not require surgery. It's very effective in removing excess stomach fat, love handles or fat in other areas.

FAST, EFFECTIVE and SAFE, it's the most advanced non-invasive method of fat reduction to date. It works by focusing high frequency ultrasound waves from outside the body to targeted areas. These ultrasound waves break down fat cells without damaging blood vessels or other tissues. The fat cells are then eliminated through natural processes over a period of about 3 weeks, in the same way the body dissipates the discoloration from a bruise.

Ultrashape was founded 5 years ago in USA by Ami Glicksman M.D., formerly a senior plastic surgeon and Yoram Eshel, PhD, MBA, a leading expert in high-power ultrasound technology. When they developed Ultrashape, it was well known that ultrasound waves were able to break down and destroy fat cells, releasing the fat contained within them. Glicksman and Eshel built on that to come up with the unique concept of Ultrashape.

Ultrashape is the first and only non-surgical fat-destroying treatment. It promises a reduction of up to 2 cm. in a single session. It is such a hassle-free procedure. You walk in, get the treatment and go straight to your next appointment. It's as easy as that. Absolutely no anesthesia, no pain and no recovery is needed. Patients can resume their normal activities right after a treatment. It does not have the risks of liposuction and can be used to effectively deal with problem areas of fat.

Normally about 4 or 5 sessions are recommended to fully achieve the result required. Both men and women who have tried it were impressed by the immediate results after just a single session. Proven effective, Ultrashape is definitely a breakthrough in fat reduction.

Ultrashape is now available at **Marie France FOR MEN**. Call 813-7959 for your free consultation. All consultations and treatments are strictly conducted in private.

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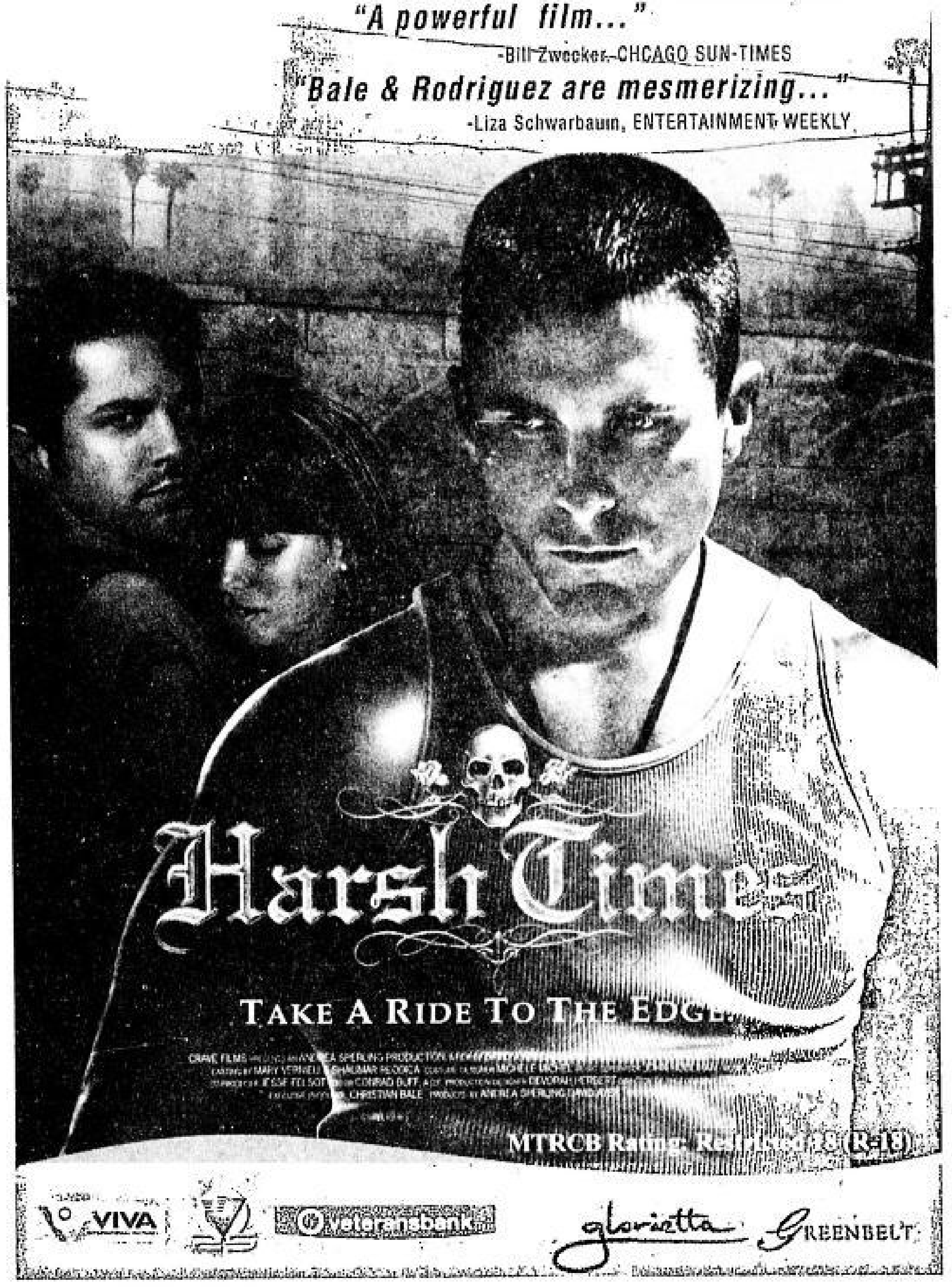

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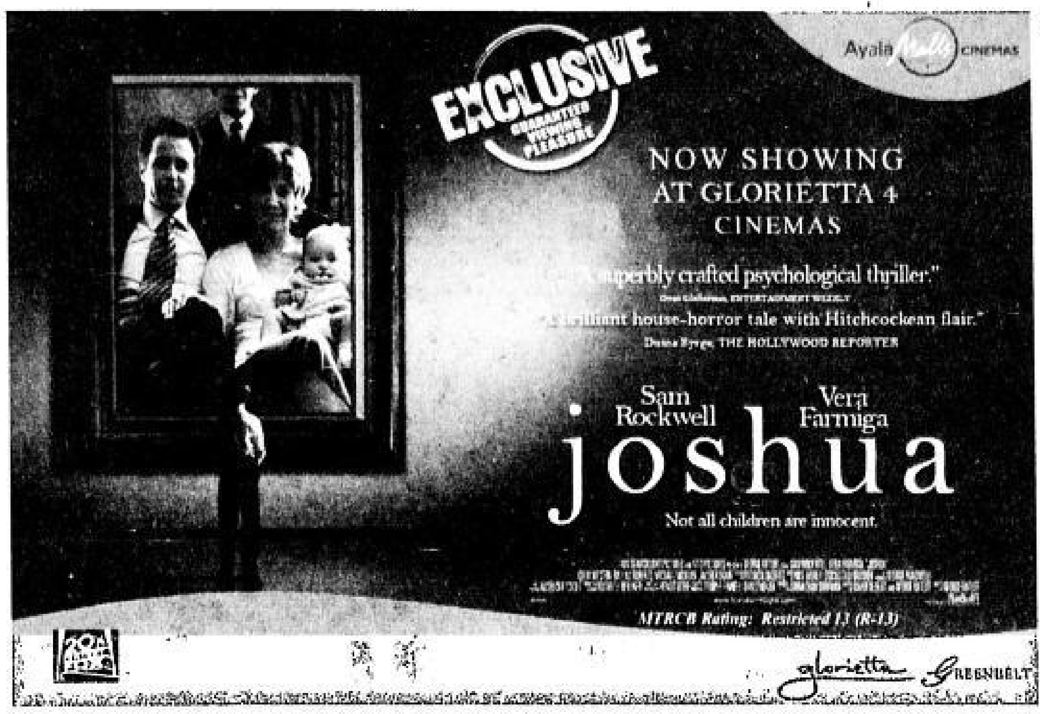

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LLOYD Labastida: "We should behave now."

ROGER CARPIO

'Tribu' boys…

From page D1

nanginginig na ako (Oh, it's cold here in Baguio, I'm shivering)," Labastida started.

Shielbert Manuel was wearing his trademark accessories and black bonnet.

The "Tribu" cast members are going all over the country, meeting with other gang members. Manuel's advice to them: "Stay in school."

Labastida himself was in school, but had taken a break to promote the movie.

During a forum at the CAP-John Hay Trade and Cultural Center after a screening, he said the "Tribu" boys should behave like role models now, following the movie's popularity. *"Naging idolo na kami ng mga bata."* *Frank Cimatu, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

AT THE CINEMAS

THX

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GLORIETTA 1	1 NO RESERVATIONS	2 RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION	3 ROGUE ASSASIN	4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
GLORIETTA 4	1 I NOW PONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	2 RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION	3 THX RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 JOSHUA	5 UNDERDOG	6 NO RESERVATIONS	7 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
GREENBELT 1	1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU	2 RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION		
GREENBELT 3	1 THX NO RESERVATIONS GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 JOSHUA GUARANTEED SEATS	4 UNDERDOG / SHOOT 'EM UP GUARANTEED SEATS	5 I NOW PONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION	2 NO RESERVATIONS		
	3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU	4 ROGUE ASSASIN	5 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION	2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU	3 I NOW PONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	4 THE BRAVE ONE
MARKET! MARKET!	1 RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION	2 NO RESERVATIONS		
	3 ROGUE ASSASIN	4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU	5 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY	
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	5 SHOOT 'EM UP	6 UNDERDOG / THE BRAVE ONE	7 THX RESIDENT EVIL: EXTINCTION GUARANTEED SEATS	

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Glorietta - 752 7272
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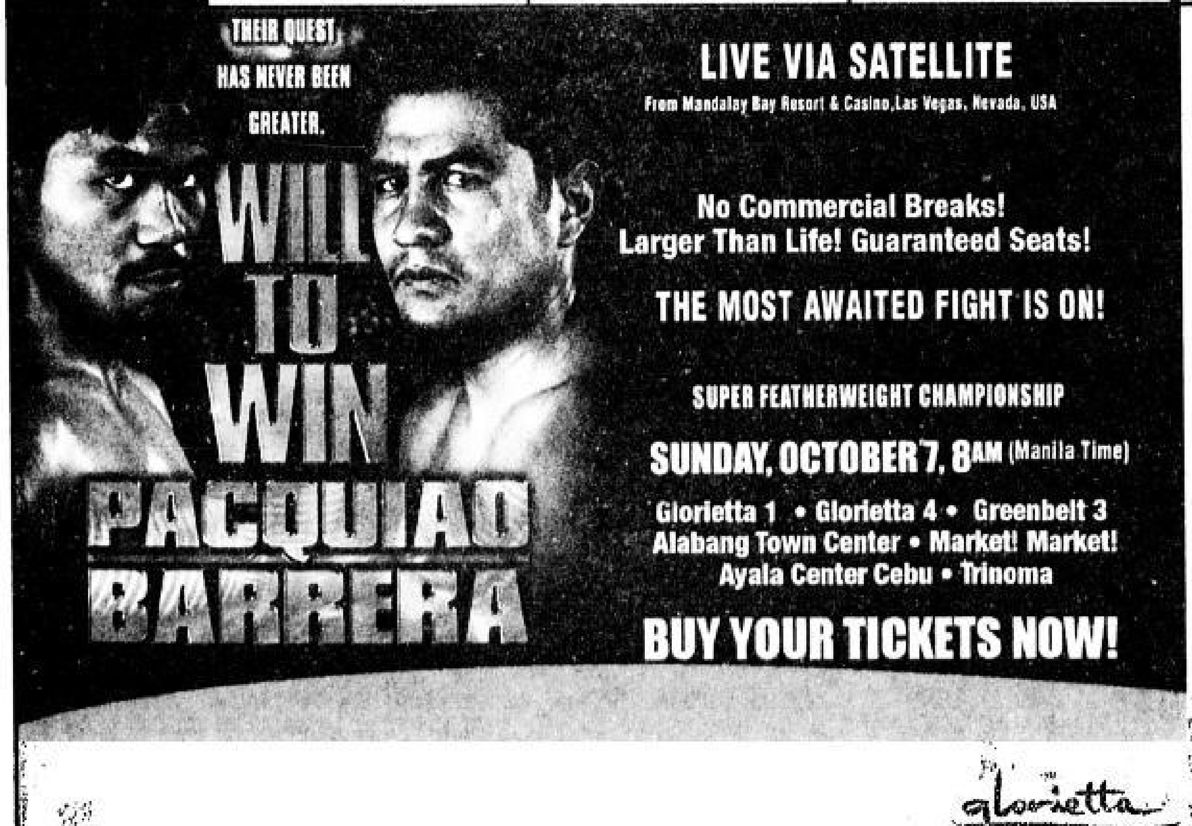
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala Malls

glorietta	BPI Appliance Madness September 26 to October 16 at Glorietta Activity Center
GREENBELT	Jazz Nights September 26, 2007 at the Greenbelt 2 Al Fresco
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Town Cheers Competition September 22 & 23, 2007 at the Activity Center
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Elliot Yamin of American Idol Live! September 26; 6 pm; OnStage (Cinema 1)
MARKET! MARKET!	Toyota Showcase September 28 to 30, 2007; at the Activity Center
Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST September 15 - October 7, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
Ayala MUSEUM	FORMS & SPACES: An Exhibition by MAIA & Aaron Bautista September 10 to 27, 2007; ArtistSpace For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
TriNoma	Mother Care Exhibit September 16 to 30; 10 am to 9 pm; Restoration Area, Level 3



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DID YOU KNOW...

'Jack Bauer' charged with drunk driving

WASHINGTON—KIEFER SUTHERLAND, who portrays the ultimate terrorist-fighting agent Jack Bauer in the hit television series "24," faces possible prison after he was formally charged Friday with drunk driving.

Sutherland, 40, risks a year and a half in jail for two charges for driving while intoxicated, according to the office of the Los Angeles city attorney.

AFP

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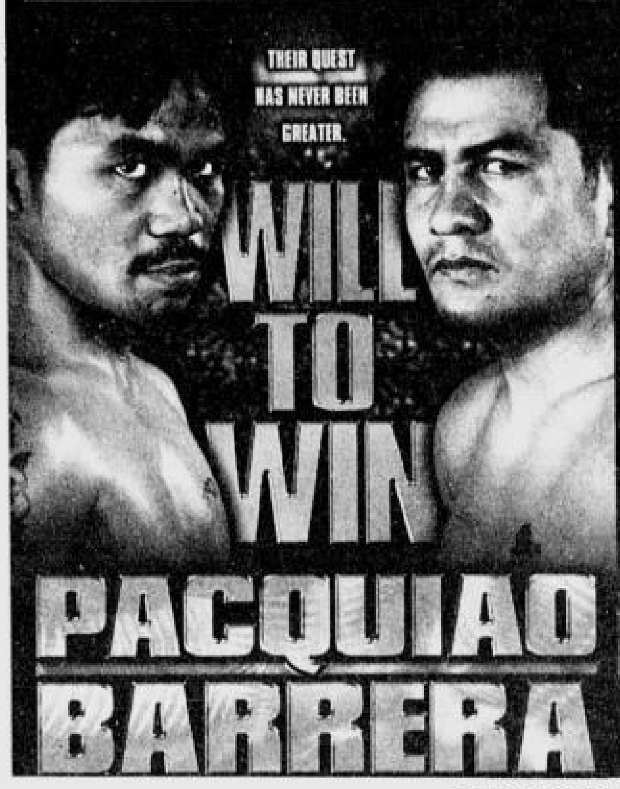
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2 ROGUE ASSASSIN
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4 RESIDENT EVIL
5 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
6 RESIDENT EVIL
7 NO RESERVATIONS
8 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
9 UNDERDOG
10 1408
11 SHOOT EM' UP
12 RUSH HOUR 3

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
3 RESIDENT EVIL
4 RESIDENT EVIL
5 STARDUST
6 NO RESERVATION
7 STARDUST
8 1408
9 RESIDENT EVIL
10 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
11 THE BRAVE ONE
12 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 UNDERDOG
2 RESIDENT EVIL
3 A LOVE STORY
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN
5 1408/THE BRAVE ONE
6 SHOOT EM' UP
7 RESIDENT EVIL
8 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
9 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
10 RESIDENT EVIL
11 NO RESERVATION
12 STARDUST

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 RESIDENT EVIL
2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 NO RESERVATION
5 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
6 THE BRAVE ONE
7 SHOOT EM' UP
8 STARDUST
9 1408
10 UNDERDOG

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 RESIDENT EVIL
2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 STARDUST
5 NO RESERVATION
6 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 STARDUST
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 RESIDENT EVIL
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN
5 SHOOT EM' UP
6 NO RESERVATION
7 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
8 SHOOT EM' UP
9 UNDERDOG

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 RESIDENT EVIL
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 STARDUST
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
2 RESIDENT EVIL
3 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN
5 NO RESERVATION
6 RESIDENT EVIL
7 STARDUST
8 DISTURBIA
9 THE BRAVE ONE
10 RUSH HOUR 3
11 UNDERDOG
12 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04
1 RESIDENT EVIL
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 RESIDENT EVIL/DISTURBIA

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 RESIDENT EVIL
2 ROGUE ASSASSIN
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
4 STARDUST

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 STARDUST
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 RESIDENT EVIL
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN

LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
2 UNDERDOG
3 RESIDENT EVIL
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
5 ROGUE ASSASSIN
6 THE HOST
7 RESIDENT EVIL
8 STARDUST

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOhU
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 SKINWALKERS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 UNDERDOG
2 NANCY DREW
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
4 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 DISTURBIA
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 SKINWALKERS
4 DAYWATCH

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 SKINWALKERS
2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 UNDERDOG
5 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY
6 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
2 DISTURBIA
3 DAYWATCH
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 DISTURBIA
3 SKINWALKERS
4 NANCY DREW

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197836-39
1 NANCY DREW
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 BLIND DATING
4 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 RESIDENT EVIL
3 NO RESERVATION
4 STARDUST

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811
1 THE LAST LEGION
2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 UNDERDOG
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
4 DISTURBIA
5 THE LAST LEGION
6 RESIDENT EVIL

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 THE LAST LEGION
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 UNDERDOG
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 INVASION
2 **RESERVED**
3 SKINWALKERS
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
5 THE BRAVE ONE
6 ROGUE ASSASSIN
7 **RESERVED**
8 THE LAST LEGION

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 THE BRAVE ONE
2 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY
3 RESIDENT EVIL
4 ROGUE ASSASSIN
5 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
6 THE LAST LEGION
7 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
8 RESIDENT EVIL

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 ROGUE ASSASSIN
3 NANCY DREW
4 DISTURBIA

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ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

MOVIEWORLD
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GALLERIA

[illegible]

1 RESIDENT EVIL 3 • THX
12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:30

2 RESIDENT EVIL 3
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

4 STARDUST Sneak Preview
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

5 ANG LALAKE sa PAROLA
12:40 2:30 4:20 6:10 8:00 9:50

6 THE BRAVE ONE
1:00 3:30

7 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

8 indieSine: GULONG
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

9 NO RESERVATION
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

10 ROGUE ASSASSIN
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

A FILM BY SOCKIE FERNANDEZ

GULONG is about friendship, love and life. The story is told from the point-of-view of Apao, a smart, kindhearted boy whose quest for an old bicycle reveals the stuff he is made of. With him on this adventure are his insan Momoy and his best friend Tom-Tom. The story begins with a question: How are our 3 friends going to spend their summer vacation? Tom-Tom suggests that they go to his uncle's fishpond, an hour bike ride from where they live. Apao and Momoy have a problem as they don't own a bike! There are no jeeps and it is too far to walk. Momoy finds an old bicycle but the owner, an old woman named Tita Maggie, will only give it to him if he pays her a hundred pesos. He agrees and promises to come back with the money the next day. This starts a series of events which affects Apao, his friends, his family and even his community. In the end, a discarded 40-year old bicycle connects the past to present and becomes a catalyst for healing old wounds and reviving a love affair that has long been left for dead

MTRCB Rating: G

watch this only at Robinsons Movieworld Galleria
September 22 to October 02

INDIESINE

ERMITA

1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

2 STARDUST Sneak Preview

3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
10:10 12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

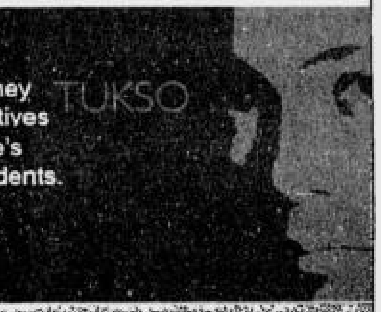
4 RESIDENT EVIL 3
12:00 2:25 4:50 7:10 9:25

5 NO RESERVATION
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:25 10:00

6 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

7 ROGUE ASSASSIN
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:25 10:00

The mysterious death of a young village lass leads to the investigation of those who knew her and what they may have to gain from her death. Told from the perspectives of the different characters, the film examines how one's view may lead to varying interpretations of the same incidents.



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1 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
1:00 3:35 6:15 9:00

2 RESIDENT EVIL 3
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
11:25 1:50 4:10 6:40 9:05

4 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME 11:20, 1:40
RESIDENT EVIL 3 4:00 6:20 8:40

5 ROGUE ASSASSIN
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:40 9:00

6 THE BRAVE ONE
1:10 3:40 6:20 9:00

7 NO RESERVATION
11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05

8 STARDUST Sneak Preview

NOVALICHES

Ticket Price: P90 / P100 936-3231 / 936-3229-30

1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 NO RESERVATION
3 STARDUST Sneak Preview
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

PIONEER

Ticket Price: P100 / P110 687-6378

1 NO RESERVATION
1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40

2 RESIDENT EVIL 3
11:40 1:55 4:10 6:25 8:40

3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:45

4 STARDUST Sneak Preview

STA. ROSA

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1 THE LAST LEGION
2 NANCY DREW
3 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

LIPA

Ticket Price: P90 (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 I KNOW WHO KILLED ME
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 DAYWATCH
4 DISTURBIA

DASMARIÑAS

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1 DISTURBIA
2 THE BRAVE ONE
3 RESIDENT EVIL 3
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

IMUS

Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 RESIDENT EVIL 3
2 STARDUST Sneak Preview
3 ROGUE ASSASSIN
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

ANGELES

Ticket Price: P90 / P95 (045) 892-2348

1 THE BRAVE ONE
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 SKINWALKERS
4 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY

TARLAC

1 THE INVASION
2 A LOVE STORY
3 1408

STARMILLS

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1 I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY
2 ROGUE ASSASSIN
3 SKINWALKERS
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 THE BRAVE ONE

BACOLOD

Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0459

1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 NANCY DREW
4 DISTURBIA
5 WAITRESS
6 LIGAW LIHAM

ILOILO

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1 ROGUE ASSASSIN
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 UNDERDOG
5 SKINWALKERS
6 STOMP THE YARD

'Zaido' director no 'Shaider' fan

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

TV DIRECTOR DOMINIC ZAPATA ADMITS he didn't watch the Japanese live-action series "Shaider" as a kid.

"I wasn't a fan," he says. "I was more into (Japanese animated cartoon shows) 'Voltes V' and 'Mazinger Z.'"

Now he's directing GMA 7's "Zaido," Pinoy version of "Shaider," first aired in the country in the late 1980s.

He recounts, "I asked myself, 'Am I the right guy for this?' Then I realized that, on the positive side, I'd have a fresh take on it."

Zapata, who previously directed *komiks* classics "Darna" and "Captain Barbell" for the Kapuso network, doesn't mind re-imagining old material for new audiences.

"All the stories in the world have been written. It's just a matter of repackaging old stories to cater to new tastes."

He puts it in culinary terms: "Our ancestors have been cooking fish the same way for ages. We just have to come up with new ways to present it."

> Even so, Dominic Zapata says P10B Kapuso network is fully behind the series

DIREK Dominic says his version hews closely to the original's campy spirit.

He promises to stay true to the "campy" spirit of "Shaider."

For example, his fight scenes hew closely to the original. "We make use of bigatures—big miniatures—for the action scenes. People in robot or monster costumes do the stunts. That's the same technique used in Japan."

Zapata explains: "Technically, we're making a lot of improvements ... like digital doubles for the characters. We now make characters fly and do other things that a person in robot costume can't do."

He is also looking at incorporating the French extreme sport Yamakasi Parkour into the story. "It was used in the opening sequence of the latest James Bond movie 'Casino Royale.' Stuntmen jump over obstacles without the use of wires and rope. We can try to do those stunts," he says. "Or maybe we can learn from the local group that practices Yamakasi Parkour."

The challenge

Zapata asserts that the "P10-billion" GMA network is fully behind him. "So far, they've approved all my requests."

The challenge, he clarifies, isn't about "trying to beat the competition, it's trying to outdo yourself."

"Zaido" premiered last week, on the same night as the ABS-CBN *fantaserye* "Lastikman."

"The audience is always looking for something new and different. We're definitely punching above our weight class with 'Zaido,'" concludes Zapata.

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2 NO RESERVATIONS
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
4 CHUCK & LARRY

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3 RESIDENT EVIL - 3
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
5 PLEASE CALL

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1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 ROGUE ASSASIN
3 RESIDENT EVIL - 3
4 NO RESERVATIONS

THEATRES
1 SKINWALKERS
2 NANCY DREW
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 DAY WATCH
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

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1 CHUCK & LARRY
2 RESIDENT EVIL - 3
3 NO RESERVATIONS
4 UNDERDOG
5 RESIDENT EVIL - 3
6 RESIDENT EVIL - 3
7 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
8 SHOOT THEM UP
9 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
10 ROGUE ASSASIN

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9041927
1 RESIDENT EVIL - 3
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 NO RESERVATIONS
4 RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
5 RESIDENT EVIL - 3

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 DISTURBIA
3 1408
4 SHOOT THEM UP

Maragana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 RESIDENT EVIL - 3
3 NO RESERVATIONS

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 NANCY DREW
2 LAST LEGION

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 SKINWALKERS
3 THE BRAVE ONE
4 CHUCK & LARRY

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
2 EVAN ALLMIGHTY

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 CHUCK & LARRY
2 RESIDENT EVIL - 3
3 NO RESERVATIONS
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

CINEMA 2000
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Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 I KNOW WHO KILL ME
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 RISE
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 LAST LEGION
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 THE INVASION

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 DISTURBIA
2 I KNOW WHO KILL ME
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
4 DAY WATCH

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 DAY WATCH
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU
3 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 ZOMBIES
2 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 PLEASE CALL
2

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 1408
2 KIROT SA DIBDIB
3 LIBERATED
4 SHOOT THEM UP

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 RISE
2 KIRIDA
3 IVE FALLEN FOR YOU
4 TUKSO SI CHARITO
5 SHOOT THEM UP

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 PILYA
2 DAY WATCH
3 I KNOW WHO KILL ME
4 DISTURBIA

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 PLEASE CALL
2

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 1 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU 11:00, 1:20, 3:40, 6:00, 8:20, 10:35 GP
CINEMA 2 RESIDENT EVIL 11:30, 2:05, 4:40, 7:15, 9:50 R-13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
CINEMA 3 RESIDENT EVIL 12:00, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45, 10:20 R-13
CINEMA 4 CHUCK & LARRY / STARDUST 12:00, 2:40, 5:05, 7:35, 10:05 R-13 / GP
CINEMA 5 NO RESERVATIONS 10:40, 1:00, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00, 10:20 GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

October 08 & 09, 2007	"Alamat" Stageplay	[illegible]
October 12 & 13, 2007	Apo Hiking Society	8:00 PM
Sep. 27, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	Cerrudo Classico	8:00 PM
October 25, 2007	Ogie Alcasid	8:00 PM
October 26, 2007	John Lesaca	8:00 PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION PLS. CALL 721-6726 OR 721-0635
THE WILL TO WIN
PACQUIAO vs BARRERA II
SUPER FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP
OCTOBER 7, 2007 8:00 AM
WATCH IT AT PROMENADE CINEMA
TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 NO RESERVATIONS MTRCB GP 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
2 RESIDENT EVIL 3 MTRCB R-13 12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
3 STAR DUST MTRCB GP 1:00, 3:40, 6:20, 9:00
4 I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU MTRCB GP 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:30
PREMIERE THEATRE I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK AND LARRY (R-13) 12:30, 3:20
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
The Most Awaited Fight is On!
The Will to Win "PACQUIAO vs BARRERA"
Super Featherweight Championship
on OCTOBER 7, 2007 (SUNDAY) - 8:00 AM (MANILA TIME)
Live Via Satellite from
Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada
Cinema Gates Open at 7:00 AM - Ticket Price : P 600.00
6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-7851, loc. 171/ 170 or 633-2227
for more details.
Shangri-La Plaza

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Richard Poon
Watch him bring back the classics, with hits from Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Rod Stewart, Harry Connick, Jr. and more...
Every Tuesday at 8PM
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FREE ADMISSION!
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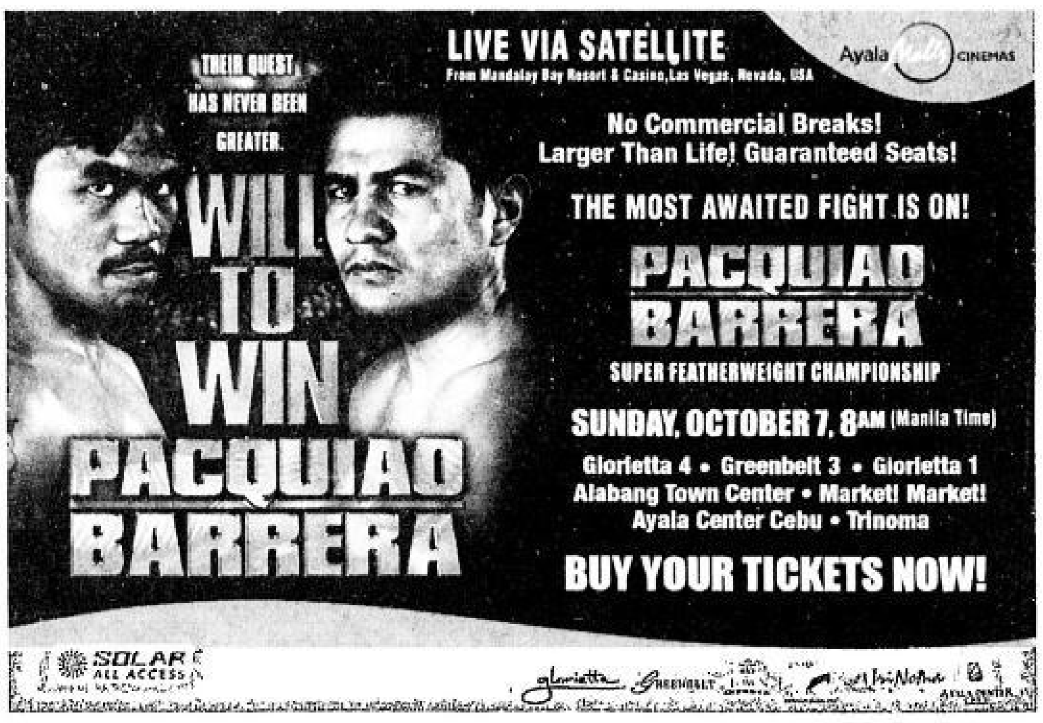
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
STARDUST 2:00, 4:40, 7:30, 10:20 G
RESIDENT EVIL 3 1:35, 3:40, 6:15, 8:40, 11:00 R-13
NO RESERVATIONS 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 G
I'VE FALLEN FOR YOU 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 9:50 G



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the City of Makati and CHICKEN FUN NUGGETS
in cooperation with MAKE UP FOR EVER
By William Shakespeare
Directed by Bart Guingona
September 15 to October 7, 2007
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